THE LIFE AND WORKS OF THOMAS PAINE

VOL. V

LETTERS & DISSERTATIONS

Patriots' Edition

THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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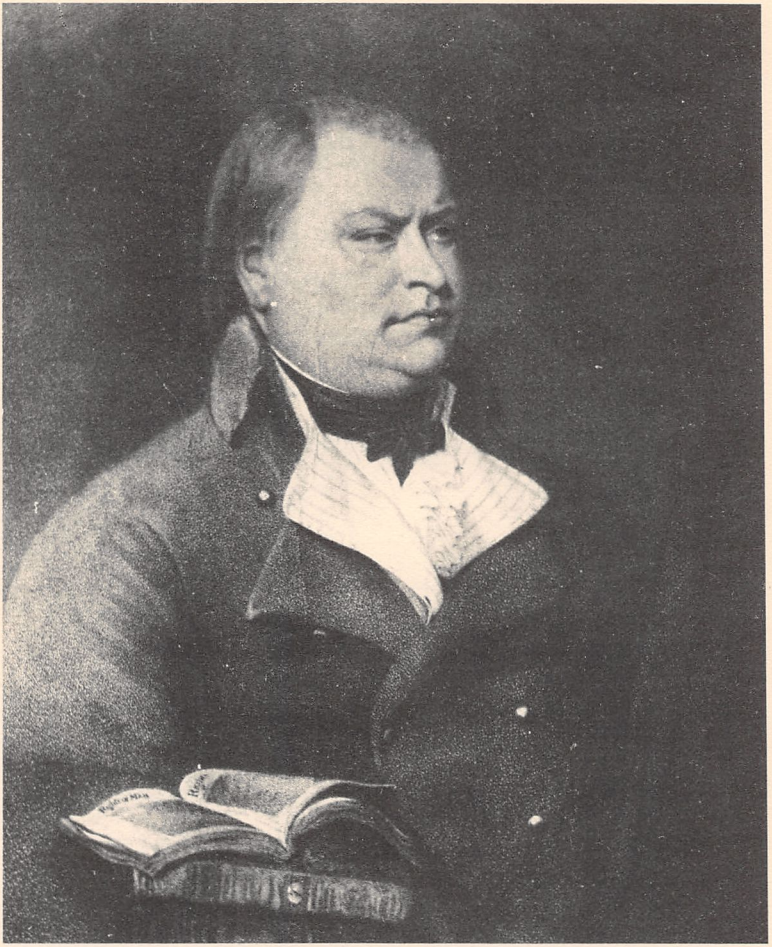

Thomas Clio Rickman

Publisher and friend of Thomas Paine with whom Paine lived in London. In his home Paine wrote "Rights of Man, Part II." Rickman was prosecuted by the British Government for publishing some of Paine's writings but made his escape to Paris.

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Patriots' Edition

Edited by
William M. Van der Weyde

VOLUME V

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OPEN LETTERS
DISSERTATIONS

SPECIFICATION OF THOMAS PAINE

A.D. 1788. No. 1667.

CONSTRUCTING ARCHES, VAULTED ROOFS, AND CEILINGS

BIOGRAPHERS of Paine," writes his friend, Joel Barlow, "should not forget his mathematical acquirements and his mechanical genius." Among the contrivances he worked out was a planing machine, a new crane, a smokeless candle, a wheel of concentric rim, a scheme for using gunpowder as a motor and, above all, his iron bridge. After his revolutionary activities, it is droll to find Paine, in his bridge patent granted in 1788, declaring his special license from "His Most Excellent Majesty King George III." Had that weak-witted monarch ever heard of the invention, he might have fancied it an engine for his destruction concocted by an American arch-rebel.

The patents for England, Scotland and Ireland were granted Paine in September, the accompanying specification having been dated August 28, 1788.

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, I, THOMAS PAINE, send greeting.

WHEREAS, His Most Excellent Majesty King George III, by his letters patent under the Great Seal of Great Britain, bearing date the twenty-sixth day of August, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, did give unto me, the said Thomas Paine, his special license that I, the said Thomas Paine, during the term of fourteen years therein expressed, should and lawfully might make, use, exercise, and vend, within England, Wales, and Town

of Berwick-upon-Tweed, my invention of "A METHOD OF CONSTRUCTING ARCHES, VAULTED ROOFS, AND CEILINGS, EITHER IN IRON OR WOOD, ON PRINCIPLES NEW AND DIFFERENT TO ANYTHING HITHERTO PRACTISED, BY MEANS OF WHICH CONSTRUCTION, ARCHES, VAULTED ROOFS, AND CEILINGS MAY BE ERECTED TO THE EXTENT OF SEVERAL HUNDRED FEET BEYOND WHAT CAN BE PERFORMED IN THE PRESENT PRACTISE OF ARCHITECTURE;" in which said letters patent there is contained a proviso obliging me, the said Thomas Paine, to cause a particular description of the nature of my said invention, and in what manner the same is to be performed, by an instrument in writing under my hand and seal, to be enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery within one calendar month next and immediately after the date of the said recited letters patent, as in and by the same (relation being thereunto had) may more fully and at large appear.

NOW KNOW YE, that in compliance with the said proviso, I, the said Thomas Paine, do hereby declare that my said invention of A Method of Constructing of Arches, Vaulted Roofs, and Ceilings, either in Iron or Wood, on Principles New and Different to anything hitherto practised by means of which Construction, Arches, Vaulted Roofs, and Ceilings may be

Erected to the Extent of several Hundred Feet beyond what can be performed in the present practise of Architecture, is described in manner following (that is to say):—

The idea and construction of this arch is taken from the figure of a spider's circular web, of which it resembles a section, and from a conviction that when nature empowered this insect to make a web she also instructed her in the strongest mechanical method of constructing it.

Another idea, taken from nature in the construction of this arch, is that of increasing the strength of matter by dividing and combining it, and thereby causing it to act over a larger space than it would occupy in a solid state, as is seen in the quills of birds, bones of animals, reeds, canes, etc. The curved bars of the arch are composed of pieces of any length joined together to the whole extent of the arch, and take curvature by bending.

Those curves, to any number, height or thickness, as the extent of the arch may require, are raised concentrically one above another, and separated, when the extent of the arch requires it, by the interposition of blocks, tubes, or pins, and the whole bolted close and fast together (the direction of the radius is the best) through the whole thickness of the arch, the

bolts being made fast by a head pin or screw at each end of them. This connection forms one arched rib, and the number of ribs to be used is in proportion to the breadth and extent of the arch, and those separate ribs are also combined and braced together by bars passing across all the ribs, and made fast thereto above and below, and as often and wherever the arch, from its extent, depth, and breadth, requires. When this arch is to be applied to the purpose of a bridge, which requires more arches than one, they are to be connected in the following manner (this is to say):

Wood piles are to be driven into the earth; over each of those piles are to be let fall a hollow iron or metal case, with a broad foot let into a bed; the interspace between the case and the wood pile to be filled up with a cement and pinned together. The whole number of those pillars are to be braced together, and formed into a platform for receiving and connecting the arches. The inter spaces of those pillars may be filled with plates of iron or lattice work so as to resemble a pier, or left open so as to resemble a colonnade of any of the orders of architecture.

Among the advantages of this construction is that of rendering the construction of bridges into a portable manufacture, as the bars and parts of which it is composed need not be longer or larger than is con-

venient to be stowed in a vessel, boat, or wagon, and that with as much compactness as iron or timber is transported to or from Great Britain; and a bridge of any extent upon this construction may be manufactured in Great Britain and sent to any part of the world to be erected. For the purpose of preserving the iron from rust it is to be varnished over with a coat of melted glass. It ought to be observed that extreme simplicity, though striking to the view, is difficult to be conceived from description, although such description exactly accords, upon inspection, with the thing described.

A practicable method of constructing arches to several hundred feet span, with a small elevation, is the desideratum of bridge architecture, and it is the principle and practicability of constructing and connecting such arches so as totally to remove or effectually lessen the danger and inconvenience of obstructing the channel of rivers, together with that of adding a new and important manufacture to the iron works of the nation, capable of transportation and exportation, that is herein described. When this arch is to be applied to the purpose of a roof and ceiling cords may be added to the arch to supply the want of butments, which are to be braced to or connected with the arch by perpendiculars.

In witness whereof, I, the said Thomas Paine, have hereunto set my hand and seal, the twenty-fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight.

THOMAS (L.S.) PAINE.

Sealed and delivered, being first duly stamped, in the presence of

PETER WHITESIDE.

AND BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twenty-fifth day of September, in the twenty-eighth year of the reign of His Majesty, King George, III, the said Thomas Paine came before our said Lord the King in His Chancery, and acknowledged the instrument aforesaid, and all and everything therein contained and specified, in form above written. And also the instrument aforesaid was stamped according to the tenor of the several statutes made in the sixth year of the reign of the late King and Queen, William and Mary of England, and so forth, and in the seventeenth and twenty-third years of the reign of His Majesty King George III.

Enrolled the said twenty-fifth day of September, in the year last above written.

LETTER TO THOMAS JEFFERSON IN PARIS

DATED LONDON, FEBRUARY 16, 1789.

WHILE in England, in 1789, engaged principally in forwarding his bridge-building project, Paine was in regular correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, then United States Minister to France. At the time of writing this letter he had gone up to London from Rotherham, in Yorkshire, where the Messrs. Walker referred to had fitted up a workshop for him during the construction of his bridge across the River Don. There, as in London, he was visited by famous engineers and political personages. He was entertained at one time by Edmund Burke, at another by the Duke of Portland, again by Lord Fitz William, mentioned in this letter, at Wentworth House. He was consulted on public affairs by Fox, Lord Lansdowne and others. Incidentally, a coolness developed between Lansdowne and Paine because the latter discouraged the former in his dream of restoring the American colonies to the British Empire. Paine's democratic spirit and manner seem to have recommended him to the English gentry and aristocracy.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of the twenty-third December continued to the — of January came safe to hand; for which I thank you. I begin this without knowing of any opportunity of conveyance, and shall follow the method of your letter by writing on till an opportunity offers. I thank you for the many and judicious observations about my bridge. I am exactly in your ideas, as you will perceive by the following account — I went to the iron works [Yorkshire] the latter end of October.

My intention at the time of writing to you was to construct an experiment arch of 250 feet [an iron

bridge], but in the first place the season was too far advanced to work out of doors, and an arch of that extent could not be worked within doors; and *nextly*, there was a prospect of a real bridge being wanted on the spot, of 90 feet extent. The person who appeared disposed to erect a bridge was Mr. Foljambe, nephew to the late Sir George Saville, and member in the last Parliament for Yorkshire. He lives about three miles from the works, and the river Don runs in front of his house, over which there is an old, ill-constructed bridge which he wants to remove.

These circumstances determined me to begin an arch of 90 feet, with an elevation of five feet.—The foreman of the works is a relative of the proprietors [Messrs. Walker], an excellent mechanic, who fell in with all my ideas with great ease and penetration. I stayed at the works till one-half of the rib, 45 feet, was completed and framed horizontally together, and came up to London at the meeting of Parliament on the fourth of December. The foreman, whom, as I told him, I should appoint "president of the board of works" in my absence, wrote me word that he has got the other half together with much less trouble than the first. He is now preparing for erecting and I for returning.

February twenty-sixth. A few days ago I received a letter from Mr. Foljambe in which he says, "I saw the rib of your bridge. In point of elegance and beauty it far exceeded my expectations, and is certainly beyond anything I ever saw."

My model and myself had many visitors while I was at the works. A few days after I got there, Lord Fitz William, heir to the Marquis of Rockingham, came with Mr. [Edmund] Burke. The former gave the workmen five guineas and invited me to Wentworth House, a few miles distant from the works, where I went, and stayed a few days.

This bridge I expect will bring forth something greater, but in the meantime I feel like a bird from its nest [America], and wishing most anxiously to return; therefore as soon as I can bring anything to bear I shall dispose of the contract and bid adieu. I can very truly say that my mind is not at home.

I am very much rejoiced at the account you give me of the state of affairs in France. I feel exceedingly interested in the affairs of that nation. They are now got or getting into the right way, and the present reign will be more immortalized in France than any that ever preceded it: they have all died away, forgotten in the common mass of things, but this will be to France like an *Anno Mundi,* or an *Anno Domini.*

The happiness of doing good, and the pride of doing great things, unite themselves in this business. But as there are two kinds of pride, the little and the great, the privileged orders will in some degree be governed by this division. Those of little pride (I mean little-minded pride) will be schismatical, and those of great pride will be orthodox, with respect to the States General. Interest will likewise have some share and could this operate freely it would arrange itself on the orthodox side. To enrich a nation is to enrich the individuals which compose it. To enrich the farmer is to enrich the farm—and consequently the landlord;—for whatever the farmer is, the farm will be. The richer the subject, the richer the revenue, because the consumption from which taxes are raised are in proportion to the abilities of people to consume; therefore the most effectual method to raise both the revenue and the rental of a country is to raise the condition of the people,—or that order known in France by the Tiers État. But I ought to ask pardon for entering into reasoning in a letter to you. I only do it because I like the subject.

I observe in all the companies I go into the impression which the present circumstances of France have upon this country. *An internal alliance* [of throne and people] in France is an alliance which

England never dreamed of, and which she most dreads. Whether she will be better or worse tempered afterwards I cannot judge of, but I believe she will be more cautious in giving offense. She is likewise impressed with an idea that a negotiation is on foot between the King [Louis XVI] and the Emperor [of Germany] for adding Austrian Flanders to France.

This appears to me such a probable thing, and may be rendered [so] conducive to the interest of all parties concerned, that I am inclined to give it credit and wish it success. I hope then to see the Scheldt opened, for it is a sin to refuse the bounties of nature. On these matters I shall be glad of your opinion. I think the States General of Holland could not be in earnest when they applied to France for the payment of the quota to the Emperor. All things considered, to request it was meanness and to expect it absurdity. I am more inclined to think they made it an opportunity to find how they stood with France. Absalom (I think it was) set fire to his brother's field of corn to bring on a conversation.

March twelfth. With respect to political matters here the truth is the people are fools. They have no discernment into principles and consequences. Had Mr. Pitt proposed a national convention at the time

of the King's insanity, he had done right; but instead of this he has absorbed the right of the nation into a right of Parliament—one house of which (the Peers) is hereditary in its own right, and over which the people have no control (not as much as they have over their King); and the other elective by only a small part of the nation. Therefore he has lessened instead of increased the rights of the people; but as they have not sense enough to see it, they have been huzzaing him. There can be no fixed principles of government, or anything like a Constitution, in a country where the government can alter itself, or one part of it supply the other.

Whether a man that has been so completely mad as not to be managed but by force and the mad shirt can ever be confided in afterwards as a reasonable man, is a matter I have very little opinion of. Such a circumstance, in my estimation, if mentioned, ought to be a perpetual disqualification.

Had the Regency gone on and the new administration been formed I should have been able to communicate some matters of business to you, both with respect to America and France, as an interview for that purpose was agreed upon, and to take place as soon as the persons who were to fill the offices should succeed. I am the more confidential with those per-

sons, as they are distinguished by the name of the Blue and Buff—a dress taken up during the American war, and the undress uniform of General Washington with lapels, which they still wear. But at any rate, I do not think it worth while for Congress to appoint any minister to this Court.

The greater distance Congress observes on this point, the better. It will be all money thrown away to go to any expense about it—at least during the present reign. I know the nation well, and the line of acquaintance I am in enables me to judge better than any other American can judge, especially at a distance. If Congress should have any business to state to the government here, it can be easily done through their Minister at Paris; but the seldomer the better.

I believe I am not so much in the good graces of the Marquis of Lansdowne as I used to be. I do not answer his purpose. He was always talking of a sort of reconnection of England and America, and my coldness and reserve on this subject checked communication. I believe he would be a good Minister for England with respect to a better agreement with France.

Remember me to the Marquis de Lafayette, Mr. Le Roy, Mr. De Corney. Please to inform me if any-

thing further has been done about the bridge; and likewise how the new bridge in your neighborhood goes on.

I am, dear sir, with much respect,

Your sincere friend,

and ob't h'ble servant,

THOMAS PAINE.

ANSWER TO FOUR QUESTIONS ON THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE POWERS

THIS document anticipates one or two passages in the second part of "Rights of Man," in which the language is almost identical. Although the exact date of its composition has not been determined, Paine probably began writing it in the Spring of 1791 and finished it that Summer, in Paris. A translation into French of the first part of "Rights of Man" was made in May of that year, and in this paper he mentions the second part of that work as in course of preparation.

This disquisition, plainly not written for publication, is in the nature of a reply to questions put to Paine, probably by Condorcet or quite as probably by Lafayette, concerning the Constitution recently submitted by the French National Assembly. Subsequently it was translated by Condorcet, and published in the "Chronique du Mois," in May, June and July of 1792.

THE four questions to which you do me the honor of requesting an answer have been sent to me in a letter by my friend M——. Laying aside the usual complimentary preliminaries, I purpose replying to them at once: for a man who regards the whole human race as his own family has little time for compliments or excuses.

It is obvious that the person who has laid these four propositions before Thomas Paine has done so with the expectation, or, at least, with the hope, that they may receive an affirmative reply. Indeed, this conclusion is easily gathered from the language he uses, which clearly implies that that austere Republican *must* give an affirmative reply if he is to hope

for that grateful approval which is merited by every task that helps along the progress of human freedom.

Well, then, I, too, can truly assert that I am keenly interested in the felicity of humanity among all peoples and in all lands, and, therefore, as a fraternal and sympathetic worker, associated with you and with everyone who holds similar opinions, I will, with all possible brevity, reply to your questions, and also submit certain considerations which they have prompted. In the meantime, however, you must not for a moment imagine that I have any intention of discussing the agreement or non-agreement of our opinions in all cases; but, as we are both aiming at the same goal, I shall confine myself to the task of simply discussing with you the best means of reaching that goal.

After acknowledging that the foundation upon which the French Constitution rests is excellent, you point out its deficiencies in many particulars, and then you demand:

1. As there is a want of equilibrium between the legislative and executive powers, is not the latter exposed to the danger of being overbalanced by the former?

2. Is not the executive power too feeble to be able to force the people to obey the law and also too feeble

to obtain the respect and confidence necessary to a stable government?

3. Is not a legislative body composed of a single chamber likely to be the victim of its own rash impulsiveness and unrestrained impetuosity?

4. Is not the administrative system organized in such an intricate fashion as to lead to anarchy of a permanent character?

I shall first consider these questions individually, and afterwards deal with them collectively. On the other hand, while I do not care to enter at present into any debate as to their supposed amelioration or curtailment, I intend to bring to your notice a scheme for their modification in such a way as not to interfere with the orderly course of government, should such modification be deemed essential.

As to your assertion that *the foundation upon which the French Constitution rests is excellent,* there can be no difference of opinion between us, for as that foundation is the rights of man, the principle is too obvious to admit of argument. The man who should venture to gainsay it would thereby establish his kinship to the fool who said in his heart there is no God.

First Question

"As there is a want of equilibrium between the legislative and executive powers, is not the latter exposed to the danger of being overbalanced by the former?"

If the legislative and executive powers be regarded as springing from the same source, the *nation,* and as having as their object the nation's weal by such a distribution of its authority, it will be difficult to foresee any contingency in which one power could derive advantage from overbalancing the other, even if it were successful in doing so. If, on the other hand, these two powers be considered as *not* springing from the same source, and as, in fact, mutually hostile, the one contending for the rights of the nation, the other for the priviliges of a class, then surely your question assumes an entirely different aspect: in that case, what we should have to dread would not be the imminence of a single calamity, but the ruin of the entire people.

It is impossible to judge from your words which of these views you adopt, and, in any case it would be far from easy to solve a problem whose solution depends on another problem, and, for that reason, I shall avail myself fully of the freedom which the

indefinite nature of your question permits and shall make such observations as may naturally occur to me. Thus, while I may not solve the problem, I shall offer some suggestions which, perhaps, will conduce to its solution.

The baleful custom of misgovernment is so universal and the consequent sufferings of nations throughout the centuries have been so dreadful that the soul of man, helpless and blinded, has almost lost the faculty of vision; the result is that even at the present day his power of drawing a distinction between prismatic shades can hardly be said to be fully developed.

When we begin to use only such words as are fitted to express ideas simply and naturally, we see plainly that the powers of which governments are composed fall into two primary divisions: the law-making power and the executive or administrative power. There is nothing in government which really transcends these divisions.

There is, I fancy, a more exact comprehension among people generally of the character of legislative power than there is of that of executive power. By the former is understood the delegated power of enacting laws that are *consistent with the foundation and principles of the constitution.* Otherwise, the

legislative power would be pure despotism, call it by what name you will.

But the meaning ordinarily assigned to the term, executive power, is indefinite, and, consequently, our conception of it is by no means so exact and plain as when we speak of legislative power. It is associated, some way or other, in our minds with the idea of arbitrary power, and thus a feeling of suspicion rather than of confidence is aroused. You see, then, the absolute necessity of an exact definition of these two powers and the difficulty of dealing with the questions they involve in the absence of such definition.

Now, if we suppose it possible for one of these powers to encroach on the province of the other, then, of course, we must also suppose that the ability to do so is as great on one side as on the other. In that case, it is my opinion that the nation will be safer when an *elected* legislature controls the executive than when a *non-elected* executive attempts to usurp the function of legislation.

But, putting aside these considerations, I confess my inability to perceive the correctness of the comparison of a government to a pair of scales. In what does it consist? The idea which a pair of scales calls up is that of opposition. The metaphor, I imagine,

originated in England at a period when, owing to certain circumstances, it had a certain fitness. After the Norman Conquest, that nation, despairing of ridding itself of its oppressors, devoted itself for centuries to the task of finding a sort of counterpoise against their tyranny. For, with the advent of that conquest, arrived aristocracy, and the calamities with which the people had to contend were innumerable. Hence the *nation threw its whole weight in the balance against royalty and aristocracy. This afterwards came to be called the balance of the nation poised against the balance of the court.*

In a country, however, in which all the powers of the government spring from the same source, such a metaphor has no meaning. In such circumstances we cannot even conceive the possibility of two hostile governmental forces in opposition; instead of such a conception, there looms up before us one single edifice in which all is united and harmonious.

Second Question

And now I come to the second question: "Is not the executive power too feeble to be able to force the people to obey the laws, and also too feeble to obtain the respect and confidence necessary to a stable government?"

If a first proposition is fundamentally wrong, all the propositions dependent on it must necessarily be also fallacious. In this connection, therefore, the question that naturally suggests itself is: What is meant by executive power? Should the answer be: the *power of enforcing the laws,* then the phrase relates to every court of justice bound to carry out the laws whenever their enforcement is resisted. It must always be the special object of the legislature to defend the executive under this aspect; for if respect for the law is enfeebled, the laws and those who enacted them will also be treated with contempt. Should, however, the opinion prevail that the executive has not power to compel obedience to the laws and that it cannot win respect and submission from the people, another question arises: Why has it been unable to do so?

Such a question involves the consideration of the executive power under another aspect, namely as the medium through which the laws are executed rather than as the executor. When the subject is regarded from this point of view, we are forced to dwell on that part of the Constitution styled *the monarchy.*

The primary significance of the term "*monarch*" implies the absolute power of a single individual. In fact the word is capable of no other interpretation.

However sublime the principles of the Constitution may be, we must perceive here an evident contradiction between words and ideas. Now, such a contradiction always gives rise to suspicion, and, therefore, it will be well to consider how far such suspicion tends to hinder the proper execution of the laws.

Should the recollection of the characteristics of the power of monarchy in the past, and the ideas which that recollection suggests, be in any way connected with the present executive, all plans intended to invigorate the latter will serve only to augment suspicion and diminish confidence.

If it were a law of nature, or if God had issued a decree and revealed it to mankind, that, in accordance with His will, every successive custodian of authority should possess the same heart, a heart, too, incapable of guile, all suspicion and dread would vanish at once. But when we perceive that, from the mode in which nature acts, it is her apparent intention to reject the monarchical system, inasmuch as the monarchs on whom she bestows existence are sure to differ from one another both in person and disposition, one being wicked, another stupid, another insane, and another at once wicked, stupid and insane, it must surely be impossible for any reasonable person to believe any longer in such an absurdity as hereditary monarchy.

Should the French be as impervious to common sense as the English have been, such drowsy unconcern might be regarded as a state of felicity, and their thoughtlessness might be considered confidence; but confidence, to be permanent, must be based on reason.

Third Question

We have now reached the third question: "Is not a legislative body composed of a single chamber likely to be the victim of its own rash impulsiveness and unrestrained impetuosity?"

This question can scarcely receive a positive answer at present because of its complexity and of the questions involved in its discussion. Still, I shall endeavor to communicate to you the thoughts that it suggests.

When a constitution determines the limitations of authority and the principle to which the legislative body must yield obedience, it has already secured a most potent and effective check upon all abuses of authority.

Suppose, for example, a bill were introduced in one of the American legislatures, like the one which became law in an English Parliament under George I, lengthening the duration of that legislature, it never

could be enacted as a law, because such a law would be a violation of the Constitution, which limits the power of the legislature.

Still, notwithstanding the limitations that restrain power in its several departments provided by the Constitution, much will always depend on the wisdom and discretion exhibited by the various legislatures themselves.

However skilfully a constitution may be framed, it is impossible to decide previously, when there are two chambers, how far they will act as a check upon each other. They may come to an agreement not to avail themselves of this power of mutual restraint, either for good or evil; still, if the Constitution makes provision for such restraint, the result is sure to be advantageous.

In my opinion, for which I shall adduce reasons, it would be well to separate the legislature into two bodies before the discussion of any subject commences. Such an arrangement is preferable to the formation of one body always, or to the establishment of two divided chambers.

With reference to the sort of separation suggested, more consideration should be given to human passions than even to reason. Because the object is conviction or persuasion, the influence exercised by such

passions is of considerable importance, and a legislature composed of a single chamber is always exposed to the peril of deciding with precipitation; when it is divided, there will always be room for judicious reflection. The utility of discussion is obvious, and occasionally a man of superior attainments will derive profit from the ideas of a person who is his inferior intellectually; if it be his purpose to put in practise some of the ideas to which he has listened, he should, as far as possible, avoid speaking himself.

My plan would be to divide a legislature, consisting, say, of a hundred representatives, into two equal sections. The first section would discuss some question, while the second section listened. Then the second section would take up the same question. Then, after each section had heard the arguments of the other, the debate would be closed, and the subject finally submitted to the decision of the entire legislature. At least, some plan should, in my judgment, be adopted that would obviate the inconveniences which at present hamper the proceedings of a single chamber, and that would yet not entail the evils inherent in the existence of two chambers. Some of those evils I now propose to lay before you.

First, it is contrary to common sense for one part of the legislature to have it in its power to decide a

question while that question is being debated in another body, and while fresh light is being thrown on the discussion.

In the second place, it often occurs that when a question is voted on in these separate chambers, the majority is controlled by the minority in a manner that is as repulsive as it is absurd.

Let it be assumed, for example, that each of the chambers has 50 members. Now we can easily imagine a case in which the members of one assembly are unanimous, while those of the other are divided on the question in the proportion of 26 to 24. Here we have 26 outweighing 74, or, in other words, three-fourths of the legislators compelled to submit to one-fourth.

On the other hand, if the legislature be divided in the way I have suggested, you gain all the advantages derived from separate debate without the evils which accompany the establishment of two chambers.

The two chambers which form the English Parliament need not be discussed here. As legislative bodies, they have no really distinctive individual character. Their ideas are entirely moulded and colored by those of the Prime Minister in power. He waves over them his sleep-compelling wand, and they are at once plunged in the slumber of servitude.

Should we turn our eyes on the members of one of those chambers, profanely styled the House of Lords,* a designation that insults nature, we discover that nature has avenged herself by bereaving them of talent and virtue. The entire representation of England is indeed calculated to arouse compassion; still, when contrasted with the Lords, the Commons are comparatively respectable. So slight is the regard paid to that childish body that the people never make any inquiries as to its proceedings.

As an instance of its subjection to ministerial influence, I will mention that it gave the minister a majority of 90 after the debate on the war with Russia, whereas the House of Commons, which has double its number, gave him a majority of only 63. It has been well styled by Chesterfield, one of its members who was thoroughly acquainted with its composition, "the hospital for incurables."

I am not at all in favor of two chambers which have each an arbitrary veto on the action of the other. There is nothing to prove that one body will exhibit more sagacity than the other, and to confide power to a body that lacks wisdom is to incur a peril rather than to provide a safeguard. As all human institutions have grown better with the progress of time,

* Lord means master.—*Author.*

we have every reason to believe that with time also the representative system will grow better. This belief is strengthened by the fact that, just as it has encountered the greatest opposition, so it stands the best chance of at last attaining perfection.

Fourth Question

We have now reached the fourth question: "Is not the administrative system organized in such an intricate fashion as to lead to anarchy of a permanent character?"

There has been great progress in the science of government, and particularly where the state has a wide extension. This consists in allowing the several parts of a country to manage its own domestic affairs. In this fashion not only can public and private affairs be carried on with greater ease, but the loss of time and the expense incident to centralization are avoided, as well as the errors entailed by such a legislative system.

From a general standpoint, I think the usefulness of the institution to which I have alluded is unquestionable; still, I must confess that I have not any special knowledge of its work in practise, for it has always been my object to endeavor to throw light upon general principles rather than on their application to

particular cases; because if the former be sound, the latter will be sound also. But, as the science of government is so far only in its childhood, I can but hope that, whatever system may be adopted, it will permit us to take advantage of the lessons of experience.

Although much study has been devoted to the science of government in all its manifestations, one subject closely connected with it has never received the full consideration it deserves; namely, *how small is the measure of government that is actually required by man?*

This question is fully discussed in a work I am now writing; and, moreover, to deal adequately with it at present would transcend my limits.

But I am strongly inclined to believe that very little government is necessary, and that the need of government above measure is one of those ideas from which it would be well to free ourselves as early as possible.

When I inquire of a person how much government does he require, the answer I get is that he requires very little. But let me ask the same individual what amount of government he judges to be required by others, and he replies: "Oh, a very large amount, indeed!" If I continue my inquiries, I receive pretty much the same answers, and so I infer that the amount actually needed lies between these two extremes: the

lesser amount each considers required for himself and the larger amount he regards as needful for his neighbor. Government beyond measure has the effect of giving encouragement and birth to crimes that otherwise might never have come into being.

The governments of the past managed to stimulate enmity and suspicion in every direction between nations as well as between individuals, and in this fashion to perpetuate their miserable domination. The success of such a system is calculated to uproot the very foundations of society, and we still feel the effects of its corrupt putrescence. It follows that the moral nature of man must inevitably change, and that, when he is subjected to sounder principles of government, he will no longer be the suspicious creature he could not help being under the old systems. Now that nations seem to incline more and more toward the principles of civilized government, they would appear also to have gained the possession of a new faculty.

The relations between the French and English nations have assumed quite a different character during the last couple of years, and we may hopefully look forward to a similar change between the individuals of these two nations. Still, the moral changes that affect nations or individuals produce their conse-

quences far more rapidly when their tendency is evil than when it is beneficial. Suspicion may be spread without any trouble; it cannot be uprooted with anything like the same facility. If you try to eradicate it forcibly, you fail; but if you succeed in quietly undermining it, it will gradually pass away silently and noiselessly.

When we contemplate the condition of France under the old régime, we behold a government that depends for its existence upon suspicion, upon spies and detectives employed by the police authorities. There could be no confidence in social circles, where everyone was in the habit of suspecting his neighbors; the master was suspicious of his servants, neighbors of one another, the Government of everyone, and everyone of the Government. It is natural, then, that the present Government should also be suspected. This suspicion is a relic from the past, a past which it would be fortunate if the nation could forget altogether.

I shall now treat of the *best methods for the improvement of the Constitution, whenever experience shows the necessity of such improvement, without disturbing the orderly course of government.* The best method would be to add a clause to the Constitution determining the manner of such improve-

ments. There are very different ideas upon this subject, and, for that reason, I propose discussing it in a special fashion. Until the present moment, France has had no constitution; she is now about to form one and to choose a legislature. In these circumstances it is absolutely indispensable to draw a distinction between the position of the people in the act of delegating its power to those who will establish a constitution, and its subsequent position after delegating its power to a legislature elected in virtue of that constitution. Now, the Constitution and the laws are altogether different from the power of enacting laws to suit particular contingencies, conformable to the principles of the aforesaid Constitution. If the original power to establish a constitution were vested in successive legislatures as a hereditary possession, a constitution could have no real existence; the legislature would be endowed with despotic authority, and could, as in England, establish whatever kind of government it chose.

The present National Assembly, or, to be strictly accurate, the *National Assembly of the Convention*, has been compelled by circumstances to undertake legislative functions at the very time it was establishing a constitution. Thus, owing to the enormous amount of business it had to transact in uprooting

some institutions, and constructing others, and making provision for absolute necessities, its attention was being constantly distracted. Apart from the particular business to which its energies were devoted, its work in the establishment of a constitution embraces two special objects: *the one destructive, the other constructive.* In regard to the first point it could not err: the ancient structure was based on an evil principle; in other words, on usurpation.

Having reduced the subject to its elements, I shall now consider the second question, which relates to construction.

The sound basis upon which the new edifice is founded fully compensates the nation for all it has endured. But have the builders of the new edifice been too frugal or too liberal in the use they have made of the old materials? Are all its parts equally symmetrical? Has experience proved that it is less or more symmetrical than was needful?

These are questions which experience alone can answer. All that wisdom can do at present is to see that no future improvement shall be obstructed.

However, there are two subjects upon which everyone has the same opinion: the boldness of the enterprise and the perseverance that has marked its achievement. It was to be expected that passionate ardor

and the dread of falling back under bad government should have led the framers of the Constitution to be content with a relative excellence in their fear of retrogression. In view of the fact, however, that a final settlement precludes amelioration, this determination would seem of rather dubious value. Political questions are being so vastly illumined by the light of reason that the dread of man ever again plunging back into the foul night of ignorance is a dread which should be energetically discarded.

In every land throughout the universe the tendency of the interest of the greatest number is in the direction of good rather than of evil, and the inevitable result must be to elevate the science of government to a height of perfection of which we have now no conception. To fetter ourselves would be folly; to fetter posterity would be usurpation; we must do nothing that impedes progress. If man had any rights over posterity, our rights would have been ruined long ago. If, instead of regarding the future, we turn our eyes on the past, we see clearly that we should have been reduced to a very low condition indeed, if our ancestors had succeeded in laying that yoke upon our shoulders which we would fain lay upon our posterity. Had they done so, we should never have accomplished what we are now engaged in

accomplishing. The enjoyment of his rights does not suffice for man; he should also be secured in their exercise by the principles of social order.

If we wish to benefit our posterity politically, let us leave them liberty as a bequest, and, along with it, the encouragement of good example. Everything that deserves imitation is sure to be imitated. If our institutions are intrinsically admirable, posterity will assimilate them, and there will be no necessity for us to try to exercise our authority over our descendants.

When an inheritance is bequeathed, it never contains a clause enjoining its acceptance on the heirs, for such a clause would be altogether ineffective. The heirs will accept it if they deem it worth accepting, reject it if they believe the contrary. The same is the case with regard to government. The rights of man belong as much to our descendants as they do to us. We should not, in our zeal for their prosperity, begin by slighting their abilities. Perhaps, their wisdom will be more profound than ours. It would be folly in us to assert a privilege to which we have not the slightest claim.

The power of self-amendment forms a very marked feature of the Constitution. Very probably, no constitution could be established in which defects would

not appear in the course of time. The best way of dealing with such defects is to provide a method of correcting them as they arise. No constitution which has not such a corrective can be permanent. The Convention which established the Pennsylvanian Constitution, in 1776, under the presidency of Benjamin Franklin, had a clause decreeing that the Constitution should be revised every seven years by a convention, and that such additions and retrenchments as public opinion demanded should be discussed. The amendments proposed were, however, to be laid before the people for a considerable period before they were voted upon. Another convention changed this clause into another, embodying the *right of the nation to alter or perfect the Constitution whenever she should deem it necessary*.

I should prefer to such a general declaration as the above the exercise of power which would not weaken the absolute right, while, by its frequent use, it would compel the Government to avoid overstepping the principles of the Constitution.

The Federal Government of the United States, established in 1787 by the Convention over which General Washington presided, has in its Constitution a clause that calls for every improvement needed in the future. But such improvement must be effected

by the authority of the people and by the same agencies that established the Constitution. It is not enough to constitute a good government; it is equally indispensable to adopt such methods as may assure the permanency of a good government.

Indeed, no constitution that does not make provision for this purpose can be considered complete. We are taught by experience that it is exceedingly hard to effect reforms, and, therefore, we benefit posterity when we adopt such contrivances now as will insure their success.

Provided the general principles of a constitution are sound, it will always be so easy to achieve such lesser reforms as are required by experience that the nation will never be persuaded to permit abuses to be piled upon abuses. In my judgment, it would be well to begin the revision of the Constitution in seven years from the present date, for during that period sufficient time will be afforded to make the people acquainted with its faults and virtues. It is worthy of notice that a few of the most important articles of the Constitution are due to particular circumstances rather than to reflection.

As an instance, I shall mention the decree concerning the right of peace and war. The two years which the Assembly spent in establishing the Con-

stitution were assuredly not sufficiently long a period for the discussion of all the important subjects naturally connected with it. For this reason, the time for the first revision should not be put off too long, as we can easily see that certain additions and amendments will be absolutely needed. For that matter, it is by no means unlikely that before then all the European systems of government will experience a change, and that quarrels among nations will be terminated by pacific methods and not by the ferocious horrors of war.

The revolution which is influencing governments at present from West to East is quicker in its effects than the movement which once spread from East to West. I fondly hope that the National Assembly may have the courage to call for a convention of the representatives of the various nations of Europe, which would adopt measures for the general welfare. The felicity which liberty insures us is transformed into virtue when we communicate its enjoyment to others.

I should have completed this letter, which I began five weeks ago, sooner but for a journey which I had to make. Since then, the progress of events in France has been rapid, because of the flight and arrest of Louis XVI. All these events stimulate the

reasoning faculty. Man advances from idea to idea, from thought to thought, and all the time he is unaware of his marvelous progress. Those who fancy that the goal of its political knowledge has been attained by France will soon discover their mistake, and will be quickly outstripped unless they quicken their own paces. Not a day passes unaccompanied by a novelty. The human mind, long accustomed to struggle with kings as individuals, must now regard them as forming part of a system of government, and must conclude that monarchy is only a base political superstition which should not exist among an enlightened people. It is mental servitude that has rendered it sacred.

Suppose we draw a circle around a man, and address him thus: "You cannot step beyond this boundary, for, if you did, you would be swallowed up in an abyss." As long as the terror with which these words have inspired him continues, he will stay where he is. But if, by some lucky accident, he places one foot beyond the line, the other will come after it.

THOMAS PAINE.

ADDRESS AND DECLARATION

At a select Meeting of the Friends of Universal Peace and Liberty, held at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James' Street, August 20, 1791, the following Address and Declaration to our Fellow Citizens was agreed on and ordered to be published

THIS Address and Declaration respecting the French Revolution and the reduction of taxes was written by Paine, but was signed by J. Horne Tooke, as chairman of the meeting of London "radicals" who endorsed its sentiments. Other patrons of the Thatched House Tavern who had Court connections expressed such violent disapproval of the document that the landlord forbade another meeting.

As a result of their first meeting, however, fifty guineas were subscribed to defray the expense of publishing and advertising the document. Paine was content to have its authorship attributed to the gentleman who signed it, but that individual seems to have shouted its virtues so loudly that he was jocularly accused of praising his own work. Subsequently Paine admitted its authorship.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS: At a moment like the present, when wilful misrepresentations are industriously spread by the partizans of arbitrary power, and the advocates of passive obedience and court government, we think it incumbent on us to declare to the world our principles, and the motives of our conduct.

We rejoice at the glorious event of the *French Revolution.*

If it be asked: What is the French Revolution to us? We answer (as it has been already answered in

another place *) *It is much* to us as men: much to us as Englishmen.

As men we rejoice in the freedom of twenty-five millions of our fellow men. We rejoice in the prospect which such a magnificent example opens to the world. We congratulate the French nation for having laid the axe to the root of tyranny, and for erecting government on the sacred *hereditary rights of man*—rights which appertain to ALL, and not to any one more than to another. We know of no human authority superior to that of a whole nation; and we profess and proclaim it as our principle that every nation has at all times an inherent indefeasible right to constitute and establish such government for itself as best accords with its disposition, interest, and happiness.

As Englishmen we also rejoice, because we are *immediately* interested in the French Revolution.

Without inquiring into the justice on either side of the reproachful charges of intrigue and ambition, which the English and French courts have constantly made on each other, we confine ourselves to this observation: That if the Court of France only was in fault, and the numerous wars which have distressed

* Declaration of the Volunteers of Belfast.—*Author.*

both countries are chargeable to her alone, that Court now exists no longer; and the cause and the consequence must cease together. The French, therefore, by the revolution they have made, have conquered for us as well as for themselves; if it be true that their Court only was in fault, and ours never.

On this state of the case, the French Revolution concerns us *immediately*. We are oppressed with a heavy national debt, a burden of taxes, and an expensive administration of government, beyond those of any people in the world. We have also a very numerous poor; and we hold that the moral obligation of providing for old age, helpless infancy, and poverty, is far superior to that of supplying the invented wants of courtly extravagance, ambition and intrigue.

We believe there is no instance to be produced but in England, of *seven* million inhabitants, which make but little more than *one* million of families, paying yearly SEVENTEEN MILLIONS of taxes.

As it has always been held out by all administrations that the restless ambition of the Court of France rendered this expense necessary to us for our own defense, we consequently rejoice as men deeply interested in the French Revolution, for that Court, as we have already said, exists no longer; and consequently

the same enormous expenses need not continue to us.

Thus rejoicing, as we sincerely do, both as men and Englishmen, as lovers of universal peace and freedom, and as friends to our own national prosperity, and a reduction of our public expenses, we cannot but express our astonishment that any part, or any members of our own government, should reprobate the extinction of that very power in France, or wish to see it restored, to whose influence they formerly attributed (while they appeared to lament) the enormous increase of our own burdens and taxes.

What, then, are they sorry that the pretense for new and oppressive taxes, and the occasion for continuing many of the old taxes, will be at an end? If so, and if it is the policy of courts and of court governments, to prefer enemies to friends, and a system of war to that of peace, as affording more pretenses for places, offices, pensions, revenue and taxation, it is high time for the people of every nation to look with circumspection to their own interests.

Those who *pay* the expense, and *not* those who *participate* in the emoluments arising from it, are the persons immediately interested in inquiries of this kind. We are a part of that national body on whom this annual expense of seventeen millions falls; and we consider the present opportunity of the French

Revolution as a most happy one for lessening the enormous load under which this nation groans. If this be not done we shall then have reason to conclude that the cry of intrigue and ambition against *other* courts is no more than the common cant of *all* courts.

We think it also necessary to express our astonishment that a government, desirous of being called FREE, should prefer connection with the most despotic and arbitrary powers in Europe. We know of none more deserving this description than those of Turkey and Prussia, and the whole combination of German despots. Separated, as we happily are by nature, from the tumults of the Continent, we reprobate all systems and intrigues which sacrifice (and that too at a great expense) the blessings of our natural situation. Such systems cannot have a national origin.

If we are asked, what government is? We hold it to be nothing more than a NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, and we hold that to be the best which secures to every man his rights, and promotes the greatest quantity of happiness with the *least expense.*

We live to improve, or we live in vain; and therefore we admit of no maxims of government or policy

on the mere score of antiquity, or other men's authority, the *old* Whigs or the *new*.

We will exercise the reason with which we are endued, or we possess it unworthily. As reason is given at all times, it is for the purpose of being used at all times.

Among the blessings which the French Revolution has produced to that nation, we enumerate the abolition of the feudal system of injustice and tyranny on the fourth of August, 1789. Beneath the feudal system all Europe has long groaned, and from it England is not yet free. Game laws, borough tenures, and tyrannical monopolies of numerous kinds, still remain among us; but rejoicing as we sincerely do, in the freedom of others, till we shall happily accomplish our own, we intended to commemorate this prelude to the universal extirpation of the feudal system, by meeting on the anniversary of that day (the fourth of August) at the Crown and Anchor.

From this meeting we were prevented by the interference of certain *unnamed* and *skulking* persons with the master of the tavern, who informed us, that on *their* representations he could not receive us. Let those who live by, or countenance feudal oppressions, take the reproach of this ineffectual meanness and cowardice to themselves. They cannot stifle the pub-

lic declaration of our honest, open, and avowed opinions.

These are our principles, and these our sentiments. They embrace the interest and happiness of the great body of the nation of which we are a part. As to riots and tumults, let those answer for them, who, by wilful misrepresentations, endeavor to excite and promote them; or who seek to *stun* the sense of the nation, and to lose the great cause of public good in the outrages of a misinformed mob. We take our ground on principles that require no such riotous aid. We have nothing to apprehend from the poor; for we are pleading their cause. And we fear not proud oppression, for we have truth on our side.

We say, and we repeat it, that the French Revolution opens to the world an opportunity in which all good citizens must rejoice—that of promoting the general happiness of man. And that it moreover offers to this country in particular, an opportunity of reducing our enormous taxes.

These are our objects, and we will pursue them.

J. HORNE TOOKE,
Chairman.

PRIVATE LETTERS TO JEFFERSON

THE year 1793 in which Paine wrote these letters to Thomas Jefferson was one of moment both to Paine and Jefferson. At the time, Jefferson was Secretary of State in Washington's Cabinet, but before the end of the year he was to resign and retire to his Virginia country seat, being unable to agree with Washington on the Federal bank issue. As for Paine, he was soon to find himself excluded from the French National Convention, charged with being a foreigner, and lodged in the Luxembourg prison, where he remained nearly a year.

These letters do not intimate that such misfortunes were awaiting the author, who, indeed, contemplated returning to America very shortly and taking his "final leave of Europe." The Lewis Morris mentioned was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a neighbor of Paine's in Westchester County, New York. The farm Paine speaks of had been given to him by the State of New York.

MY DEAR FRIEND— The gentleman (Dr. Romer) to whom I intrust this letter, is an intimate acquaintance of Lavater; but I have not had the opportunity of seeing him, as he had set off for Havre prior to my writing this letter, which I forward to him under cover from one of his friends, who is also an acquaintance of mine.

We are now in an extraordinary crisis, and it is not altogether without some considerable faults here. Dumouriez, partly from having no fixed principles of his own, and partly from the continual persecution of the Jacobins, who act without either prudence or morality, has gone off to the enemy, and taken a considerable part of the army with him. The

expedition to Holland has totally failed, and all Brabant is again in the hands of the Austrians.

You may suppose the consternation which such a sudden reverse of fortune has occasioned, but it has been without commotion. Dumouriez threatened to be in Paris in three weeks. It is now three weeks ago; he is still on the frontier near to Mons with the enemy, who do not make any progress. Dumouriez has proposed to re-establish the former Constitution in which plan the Austrians act with him. But if France and the National Convention act prudently this project will not succeed. In the first place there is a popular disposition against it, and there is force sufficient to prevent it. In the next place, a great deal is to be taken into the calculation with respect to the enemy. There are now so many persons accidentally jumbled together as to render it exceedingly difficult to them to agree upon any common object.

The first object, that of restoring the old monarchy, is evidently given up by the proposal to re-establish the late Constitution. The object of England and Prussia was to preserve Holland, and the object of Austria was to recover Brabant; while those separate objects lasted, each party having one, the Confederation could hold together, each helping the other; but after this I see not how a common object

is to be formed. To all this is to be added the probable disputes about opportunity, the expense, and the projects of reimbursements. The enemy has once adventured into France, and they had the permission or the good fortune to get back again. On every military calculation it is a hazardous adventure, and armies are not much disposed to try a second time the ground upon which they have been defeated.

Had this Revolution been conducted consistently with its principles, there was once a good prospect of extending liberty through the greatest part of Europe; but I now relinquish that hope. Should the enemy by venturing into France, put themselves again in a condition of being captured, the hope will revive; but this is a risk I do not wish to see tried, lest it should fail.

As the prospect of a general freedom is now much shortened, I begin to contemplate returning home. I shall await the event of the proposed Constitution, and then take my final leave of Europe. I have not written to the President, as I have nothing to communicate more than in this letter. Please to present him my affection and compliments, and remember me among the circle of my friends.

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

THOMAS PAINE.

P.S. I just now received a letter from General Lewis Morris, who tells me that the house and barn on my farm at New Rochelle are burnt down. I assure you I shall not bring money enough to build another.

PARIS, April 20, 1793.

I WROTE you by Captain Dominick who was to sail from Havre about the twentieth of this month. This will probably be brought you by Mr. Barlow or Colonel Oswald. Since my letter by Dominick I am every day more convinced and impressed with the propriety of Congress sending commissioners to Europe to confer with the ministers of the Jesuitical Powers on the means of terminating the war. The inclosed printed paper will show there are a variety of subjects to be taken into consideration which did not appear at first, all of which have some tendency to put an end to the war. I see not how this war is to terminate if some intermediate power does not step forward.

There is now no prospect that France can carry revolutions into Europe on the one hand, or that the combined powers can conquer France on the other hand. It is a sort of defensive war on both sides.

This being the case, how is the war to close? Neither side will ask for peace though each may wish it. I believe that England and Holland are tired of the war. Their commerce and manufactures have suffered most exceedingly—besides this, it is for them a war without an object. Russia keeps herself at a distance.

I cannot help repeating my wish that Congress would send commissioners, and I wish also that yourself would venture once more across the ocean as one of them. If the commissioners rendezvous at Holland they would know what steps to take. They could call Mr. Pinckney [General Thomas Pinckney, American Minister in England] to their councils, and it would be of use, on many accounts, that one of them should come over from Holland to France. Perhaps a long truce, were it proposed by the neutral powers, would have all the effects of a peace, without the difficulties attending the adjustment of all the forms of peace.

Yours affectionately,

THOMAS PAINE.

PARIS, October 20, 1793.

LETTER TO DANTON

PARIS, May sixth, second year of the Republic [1793]

THIS notable letter was discovered by the French historian, Taine, and first published in full by his English translator, John Durand. The letter to Marat which Paine mentions remains to be located. Danton, whose moral superiority incurred the jealous enmity of Robespierre, followed Paine to prison in the year this letter was written (1793), and on meeting him there said: "That which you did for the happiness and liberty of your country, I tried to do for mine. I have been less fortunate, but not less innocent. They will send me to the scaffold; very well, my friend, I will go gaily."

M. Taine characterizes this letter as one of the most admirable utterances of the deranged period which inspired it, and says: "Compared with the speeches and writings of the time, it produces the strangest effect by its practical good sense." M. Robinet, Danton's biographer, also finds in it evidence of "a lucid and wise intellect."

CITOYEN DANTON: As you read English, I write this letter to you without passing it through the hands of a translator. I am exceedingly disturbed at the distractions, jealousies, discontents and uneasiness that reign among us, and which, if they continue, will bring ruin and disgrace on the Republic. When I left America in the year 1787, it was my intention to return the year following, but the French Revolution, and the prospect it afforded of extending the principles of liberty and fraternity through the greater part of Europe, have induced me

to prolong my stay upwards of six years. I now despair of seeing the great object of European liberty accomplished, and my despair arises not from the combined foreign powers, not from the intrigues of aristocracy and priestcraft, but from the tumultuous misconduct with which the internal affairs of the present Revolution are conducted.

All that now can be hoped for is limited to France only, and I agree with your motion of not interfering in the government of any foreign country, nor permitting any foreign country to interfere in the government of France. This decree was necessary as a preliminary toward terminating the war. But while these internal contentions continue, while the hope remains to the enemy of seeing the Republic fall to pieces, while not only the representatives of the departments but representation itself is publicly insulted, as it has lately been and now is by the people of Paris, or at least by the tribunes, the enemy will be encouraged to hang about the frontiers and await the issue of circumstances.

I observe that the confederated powers have not yet recognized Monsieur, or D'Artois, as regent, nor made any proclamation in favor of any of the Bourbons; but this negative conduct admits of two different conclusions. The one is that of abandoning

the Bourbons and the war together; the other is that of changing the object of the war and substituting a partition scheme in the place of their first object, as they have done by Poland. If this should be their object, the internal contentions that now rage will favor that object far more than it favored their former object.

The danger every day increases of a rupture between Paris and the departments. The departments did not send their deputies to Paris to be insulted, and every insult shown to them is an insult to the departments that elected and sent them. I see but one effectual plan to prevent this rupture taking place, and that is to fix the residence of the Convention, and of the future assemblies, at a distance from Paris.

I saw, during the American Revolution, the exceeding inconvenience that arose by having the government of Congress within the limits of any municipal jurisdiction. Congress first resided in Philadelphia, and after a residence of four years it found it necessary to leave it. It then adjourned to the state of Jersey. It afterwards removed to New York; it again removed from New York to Philadelphia, and after experiencing in every one of these places the great inconvenience of a government, it formed

the project of building a town, not within the limits of any municipal jurisdiction, for the future residence of Congress. In any one of the places where Congress resided, the municipal authority privately or openly opposed itself to the authority of Congress, and the people of each of these places expected more attention from Congress than their equal share with the other States amounted to. The same thing now takes place in France, but in a far greater excess.

I see also another embarrassing circumstance arising in Paris of which we have had full experience in America. I mean that of fixing the price of provisions. But if this measure is to be attempted it ought to be done by the municipality. The Convention has nothing to do with regulations of this kind; neither can they be carried into practise. The people of Paris may say they will not give more than a certain price for provisions, but as they cannot compel the country people to bring provisions to market the consequence will be directly contrary to their expectations, and they will find dearness and famine instead of plenty and cheapness. They may force the price down upon the stock in hand, but after that the market will be empty.

I will give you an example. In Philadelphia we undertook, among other regulations of this kind, to regulate the price of salt; the consequence was that no salt was brought to market, and the price rose to thirty-six shillings sterling per bushel. The price before the war was only one shilling and sixpence per bushel; and we regulated the price of flour (farina) till there was none in the market, and the people were glad to procure it at any price.

There is also a circumstance to be taken into the account which is not much attended to. The assignats are not of the same value they were a year ago, and as the quantity increases the value of them will diminish. This gives the appearance of things being dear when they are not so in fact, for in the same proportion that any kind of money falls in value articles rise in price. If it were not for this the quantity of assignats would be too great to be circulated. Paper money in America fell so much in value from this excessive quantity of it, that in the year 1781 I gave three hundred paper dollars for one pair of worsted stockings. What I write you upon the subject is experience, and not merely opinion. I have no personal interest in any of these matters, nor in any party disputes. I attend only to general principles.

As soon as a constitution shall be established I shall return to America; and be the future prosperity of France ever so great, I shall enjoy no other part of it than the happiness of knowing it. In the meantime I am distressed to see matters so badly conducted, and so little attention paid to moral principles. It is these things that injure the character of the Revolution and discourage the progress of liberty all over the world. When I began this letter I did not intend making it so lengthy, but since I have gone thus far I will fill up the remainder of the sheet with such matters as occur to me.

There ought to be some regulation with respect to the spirit of denunciation that now prevails. If every individual is to indulge his private malignancy or his private ambition, to denounce at random and without any kind of proof, all confidence will be undermined and all authority be destroyed. Calumny is a species of treachery that ought to be punished as well as any other kind of treachery. It is a private vice productive of public evils; because it is possible to irritate men into disaffection by continual calumny who never intended to be disaffected.

It is therefore equally as necessary to guard against the evils of unfounded or malignant suspicion as

against the evils of blind confidence. It is equally as necessary to protect the characters of public officers from calumny as it is to punish them for treachery or misconduct. For my own part I shall hold it a matter of doubt, until better evidence arises than is known at present, whether Dumouriez has been a traitor from policy or resentment. There was certainly a time when he acted well, but it is not every man whose mind is strong enough to bear up against ingratitude, and I think he experienced a great deal of this before he revolted.

Calumny becomes harmless and defeats itself when it attempts to act upon too large a scale. Thus the denunciation of the sections [of Paris] against the twenty-two deputies [Girondists] falls to the ground. The departments that elected them are better judges of their moral and political characters than those who have denounced them. This denunciation will injure Paris in the opinion of the departments because it has the appearance of dictating to them what sort of deputies they shall elect. Most of the acquaintances that I have in the Convention are among those who are in that list, and I know there are not better men nor better patriots than what they are.

I have written a letter to Marat of the same date as this but not on the same subject. He may show it to you if he choose.

Votre Ami,

THOMAS PAINE.

CITOYEN DANTON.

A CITIZEN OF AMERICA TO THE CITIZENS OF EUROPE

THIS remarkable document undoubtedly was written by Paine, although it purports to have been written in America, being dated Philadelphia, July 28, 1793; 18th Year of Independence, when Paine was still in Paris. This is a translation of a clerk's copy in the French Archives, with the author's name only pencilled on it, so that it cannot now be known whether the ruse of its origin in Philadelphia was due to Paine or to the government.

It covers much the same ground as the "Observations" on page 203, of this volume. It is possible that the French government, on receiving that paper, had Paine write it out as an address to the "Citizens of Europe." There is no evidence of its having been published contemporaneously.

UNDERSTANDING that a proposal is intended to be made at the ensuing meeting of the Congress of the United States of America "to send commissioners to Europe to confer with the ministers of all the neutral powers for the purpose of negotiating preliminaries of peace," I address this letter to you on that subject, and on the several matters connected therewith.

In order to discuss this subject through all its circumstances, it will be necessary to take a review of the state of Europe, prior to the French Revolution. It will from thence appear, that the powers leagued against France are fighting to attain an object, which, were it possible to be attained, would be injurious to themselves.

This is not an uncommon error in the history of wars and governments, of which the conduct of the English Government in the war against America is a striking instance. She commenced that war for the avowed purpose of subjugating America; and after wasting upwards of one hundred millions sterling, and then abandoning the object, she discovered, in the course of three or four years, that the prosperity of England was increased instead of being diminished by the independence of America. In short, every circumstance is pregnant with some natural effect, upon which intentions and opinions have no influence; and the political error lies in misjudging what the effect will be. England misjudged it in the American War, and the reasons I shall now offer will show, that she misjudges it in the present war.

In discussing this subject, I leave out of the question everything respecting forms and systems of government; for as all the governments of Europe differ from each other, there is no reason that the Government of France should not differ from the rest.

The clamors continually raised in all the countries of Europe were, that the family of the Bourbons was become too powerful; that the intrigues of the Court of France endangered the peace of Europe. Austria saw with a jealous eye the connection of France with

Prussia; and Prussia, in her turn became jealous of the connection of France with Austria; England had wasted millions unsuccessfully in attempting to prevent the family compact with Spain; Russia disliked the alliance between France and Turkey; and Turkey became apprehensive of the inclination of France toward an alliance with Russia. Sometimes the Quadruple Alliance alarmed some of the powers, and at other times a contrary system alarmed others, and in all those cases the charge was always made against the intrigues of the Bourbons.

Admitting those matters to be true, the only thing that could have quieted the apprehensions of all those powers with respect to the interference of France, would have been her entire NEUTRALITY in Europe; but this was impossible to be obtained, or if obtained was impossible to be secured, because the genius of her government was repugnant to all such restrictions.

It now happens that by entirely changing the genius of her government, which France has done for herself, this neutrality, which neither wars could accomplish nor treaties secure, arises naturally of itself and becomes the ground upon which the war should terminate. It is the thing that approaches the nearest of all others to what ought to be the political views

of all the European powers; and there is nothing that can so effectually secure this neutrality as that the genius of the French Government should be different from the rest of Europe.

But if their object is to restore the Bourbons and monarchy together, they will unavoidably restore with it all the evils of which they have complained; and the first question of discord will be whose ally is that monarchy to be?

Will England agree to the restoration of the family compact against which she has been fighting and scheming ever since it existed? Will Prussia agree to restore the alliance between France and Austria, or will Austria agree to restore the former connection between France and Prussia, formed on purpose to oppose herself; or will Spain or Russia, or any of the maritime powers, agree that France and her navy should be allied to England? In fine, will any of the powers agree to strengthen the hands of the other against itself? Yet all these cases involve themselves in the original question of the restoration of the Bourbons; and, on the other hand, all of them disappear by the neutrality of France.

If their object is not to restore the Bourbons it must be the impracticable project of a partition of the country. The Bourbons will then be out of the

question, or, more properly speaking, they will be put in a worse condition; for as the preservation of the Bourbons made a part of the first object, the extirpation of them makes a part of the second. Their pretended friends will then become interested in their destruction, because it is favorable to the purpose of partition that none of the nominal claimants should be left in existence.

But however the project of a partition may at first blind the eyes of the Confederacy, or however each of them may hope to outwit the other in the progress or in the end, the embarrassments that will arise are insurmountable. But even were the object attainable, it would not be of such general advantage to the parties as the neutrality of France, which costs them nothing, and to obtain which they would formerly have gone to war.

Of the Present State of Europe, and the Confederacy

In the first place the Confederacy is not of that kind that forms itself originally by concert and consent. It has been forced together by chance—a heterogeneous mass, held only by the accident of the moment; and the instant that accident ceases to

operate, the parties will retire to their former rivalships.

I will now, independently of the impracticability of a partition project, trace out some of the embarrassments which will arise among the confederated parties; for it is contrary to the interest of a majority of them that such a project should succeed.

To understand this part of the subject it is necessary, in the first place, to cast an eye over the map of Europe and observe the geographical situation of the several parts of the Confederacy; for however strongly the passionate politics of the moment may operate, the politics that arise from geographical situation are the most certain and will in all cases finally prevail.

The world has been long amused with what is called the "*balance of power.*" But it is not upon armies only that this balance depends. Armies have but a small circle of action. Their progress is slow and limited. But when we take maritime power into the calculation, the scale extends universally. It comprehends all the interests connected with commerce.

The two great maritime powers are England and France. Destroy either of those and the balance of naval power is destroyed. The whole world of com-

merce that passes on the ocean would then lie at the mercy of the other, and the ports of any nation in Europe might be blocked up.

The geographical situation of those two maritime powers comes next under consideration. Each of them occupies one entire side of the channel from the straits of Dover and Calais to the opening into the Atlantic. The commerce of all the Northern nations, from Holland to Russia, must pass the straits of Dover and Calais and along the Channel, to arrive at the Atlantic.

This being the case, the systematical politics of all the nations, northward of the straits of Dover and Calais, can be ascertained from their geographical situation; for it is necessary to the safety of their commerce that the two sides of the Channel, either in whole or in part, should not be in the possession either of England or France. While one nation possesses the whole of one side and the other nation the other side, the northern nations cannot help seeing that in any situation of things their commerce will always find protection on one side or the other. It may sometimes be that of England and sometimes that of France.

Again, while the English Navy continues in its present condition it is necessary that another navy

should exist to control the universal sway the former would otherwise have over the commerce of all nations. France is the only nation in Europe where this balance can be placed. The navies of the North, were they sufficiently powerful, could not be sufficiently operative. They are blocked up by the ice six months in the year. Spain lies too remote; besides which it is only for the sake of her American mines that she keeps up her navy.

Applying these cases to the project of a partition of France, it will appear, that the project involves with it a DESTRUCTION OF THE BALANCE OF MARITIME POWER; because it is only by keeping France entire and indivisible that the balance can be kept up. This is a case that at first sight lies remote and almost hidden. But it interests all the maritime and commercial nations in Europe in as great a degree as any case that has ever come before them. In short, it is with war as it is with law. In law, the first merits of the case become lost in the multitude of arguments; and in war they become lost in the variety of events. New objects arise that take the lead of all that went before, and everything assumes a new aspect. This was the case in the last great confederacy in what is called the Succession War, and most probably will be the case in the present.

I have now thrown together such thoughts as occurred to me on the several subjects connected with the confederacy against France, and interwoven with the interest of the neutral powers. Should a conference of the neutral powers take place, these observations will, at least, serve to generate others. The whole matter will then undergo a more extensive investigation than it is in my power to give; and the evils attending upon either of the projects, that of restoring the Bourbons, or of attempting a partition of France, will have the calm opportunity of being fully discussed.

On the part of England, it is very extraordinary that she should have engaged in a former confederacy, and a long expensive war, to *prevent* the family compact, and now engage in another confederacy to *preserve* it. And on the part of the other powers, it is as inconsistent that they should engage in a partition project, which, could it be executed, would immediately destroy the balance of maritime power in Europe, and would probably produce a second war to remedy the political errors of the first.

A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

APPEAL TO THE CONVENTION

HAD this appeal to the French Convention ever reached that body it might have resulted in Paine being released from the Luxembourg prison where he had languished eight months and in which he wrote it, August 7, 1794. He had been arrested on the twenty-eighth day of the December preceding. But the Committee of Public Safety, to whom its delivery was confided, took care that no whisper of its existence should be heard. On the Committee were three conspirators against Paine. The circumstances are related at length in the introduction to the Memorial to Monroe on page 77.

It would appear that Paine was mistaken in attributing his imprisonment to Robespierre, in so far as he remained in prison three months after Robespierre's death. His imprisonment is more properly traced to Barrère, Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois, of the vengeful Public Safety Committee, secretly abetted, it is charged, by Gouverneur Morris, the American Minister to France, who was inimical to Paine.

CITIZENS, REPRESENTATIVES: If I should not express myself with the energy I used formerly to do, you will attribute it to the very dangerous illness I have suffered in the prison of the Luxembourg. For several days I was insensible of my own existence; and though I am much recovered, it is with exceeding great difficulty that I find power to write you this letter.

But before I proceed further, I request the Convention to observe: that this is the first line that has come from me, either to the Convention or to any of the committees, since my imprisonment—which is approaching to

eight months. Ah, my friends, eight months' loss of liberty seems almost a lifetime to a man who has been, as I have been, the unceasing defender of liberty for twenty years.

I have now to inform the Convention of the reason of my not having written before. It is a year ago that I had strong reason to believe that Robespierre was my inveterate enemy, as he was the enemy of every man of virtue and humanity. The address that was sent to the Convention some time about last August from Arras, the native town of Robespierre, I have always been informed was the work of that hypocrite and the partisans he had in the place.

The intention of that address was to prepare the way for destroying me, by making the people declare (though without assigning any reason) that I had lost their confidence; the address, however, failed of success, as it was immediately opposed by a counter-address from St. Omer, which declared the direct contrary. But the strange power that Robespierre, by the most consummate hypocrisy and the most hardened cruelties, had obtained, rendered any attempt on my part to obtain justice not only useless but dangerous; for it is the nature of tyranny always to strike a deeper blow when any attempt has been made to repel a former one. This being my situa-

tion, I submitted with patience to the hardness of my fate and waited the event of brighter days. I hope they are now arrived to the nation and to me.

Citizens, when I left the United States in the year 1787 I promised to all my friends that I would return to them the next year; but the hope of seeing a revolution * happily established in France, that might serve as a model to the rest of Europe, and the earnest and disinterested desire of rendering every service in my power to promote it, induced me to defer my return to that country, and to the society of my friends, for more than seven years.

This long sacrifice of private tranquillity, especially after having gone through the fatigues and dangers of the American Revolution which continued almost eight years, deserved a better fate than the long imprisonment I have silently suffered. But it is not the nation but a faction that has done me this injustice. Parties and factions, various and numerous as they have been, I have always avoided. My heart was devoted to all France, and the object to which I applied myself was the Constitution. The plan which I proposed to the Committee, of which

* Revolution, to Paine, was not synonymous with tears and terror, but simply meant a bloodless change or reformation of government.—*Editor.*

I was a member, is now in the hands of Barrère, and it will speak for itself.

It is perhaps proper that I inform you of the cause assigned in the order for my imprisonment. It is that I am "a foreigner"; whereas, the *foreigner* thus imprisoned was invited into France by a decree of the late National Assembly, and that in the hour of her greatest danger, when invaded by Austrians and Prussians. He was, moreover, a citizen of the United States of America, an ally of France, and not a subject of any country in Europe, and consequently not within the intentions of any decree concerning foreigners. But any excuse can be made to serve the purpose of malignity when in power.

I will not intrude on your time by offering any apology for the broken and imperfect manner in which I have expressed myself. I request you to accept it with the sincerity with which it comes from my heart; and I conclude with wishing fraternity and prosperity to France, and union and happiness to her representatives.

Citizens, I have now stated to you my situation, and I can have no doubt but your justice will restore me to the liberty of which I have been deprived.

THOMAS PAINE.

Luxembourg, Thermidor 19, 2nd Year of the French Republic, one and indivisible.

MEMORIAL

Addressed to James Monroe, Minister From the United States of America to the French Republic

HAVING been confined in the Luxembourg prison for more than eight months, at the secret instigation of Gouverneur Morris, American Minister to France, to whom he had appealed in vain, Paine took heart when Morris was succeeded by James Monroe, to whom he addressed this Memorial on September 10, 1794. It was important to Morris to keep him in prison, for, had he been released earlier than he was (November 4, 1794), his testimony might have reversed their positions.

This Memorial was inspired by a letter to Paine from one Peter Whiteside, a Philadelphian in Paris, informing him that he was not regarded by the American Government as an American citizen, and that no American Minister could interfere in his behalf. This false statement emanated from Morris, who was still in Paris, and whose object was to prevent Paine from returning to America.

I ADDRESS this memorial to you, in consequence of a letter I received from a friend, 18 Fructidor (September fourth), in which he says, "Mr. Monroe has told me, that he has no orders [meaning from the American Government] respecting you; but I am sure he will leave nothing undone to liberate you; but, from what I can learn, from all the late Americans, you are not considered either by the Government, or by the individuals, as an American citizen. You have been made a French citizen, which you have accepted, and you have further

made yourself a servant of the French Republic; and, therefore, it would be out of character for an American Minister to interfere in their internal concerns. You must therefore either be liberated out of compliment to America, or stand your trial, which you have a right to demand."

This information was so unexpected by me, that I am at a loss how to answer it. I know not on what principle it originates; whether from an idea that I had voluntarily abandoned my citizenship of America for that of France, or from any article of the American Constitution applied to me. The first is untrue with respect to any intention on my part; and the second is without foundation, as I shall show in the course of this memorial.

The idea of conferring honor of citizenship upon foreigners, who had distinguished themselves in propagating the principles of liberty and humanity, in opposition to despotism, war and bloodshed, was first proposed by me to Lafayette, at the commencement of the French Revolution, when his heart appeared to be warmed with those principles. My motive in making this proposal, was to render the people of different nations more fraternal than they had been, or then were. I observed that almost every branch of science had possessed itself of the exercise

of this right, so far as it regarded its own institution.

Most of the academies and societies in Europe, and also those of America, conferred the rank of honorary member, upon foreigners eminent in knowledge, and made them, in fact, citizens of their literary or scientific republic, without affecting or anyways diminishing their rights of citizenship in their own country or in other societies: and why the science of government should not have the same advantage, or why the people of one nation should not, by their representatives, exercise the right of conferring the honor of citizenship upon individuals eminent in another nation, without affecting *their* rights of citizenship, is a problem yet to be solved.

I now proceed to remark on that part of the letter, in which the writer says, that *from what he can learn from all the late Americans, I am not considered in America, either by the Government or by the individuals, as an American citizen.*

In the first place I wish to ask, what is here meant by the Government of America? The members who compose the Government are only individuals, when in conversation, and who, most probably, hold very different opinions upon the subject. Have Congress as a body made any declaration respecting me, that they now no longer consider me as a citizen? If

they have not, anything they otherwise say is no more than the opinion of individuals, and consequently is not legal authority, nor anyways sufficient authority to deprive any man of his citizenship. Besides, whether a man has forfeited his rights of citizenship, is a question not determinable by Congress, but by a court of judicature and a jury; and must depend upon evidence, and the application of some law or article of the Constitution to the case. No such proceeding has yet been had, and consequently I remain a citizen until it be had, be that decision what it may; for there can be no such thing as a suspension of rights in the interim.

I am very well aware, and always was, of the article of the Constitution which says, as nearly as I can recollect the words, that "any citizen of the United States, who shall accept any title, place, or office, from any foreign king, prince, or state, shall forfeit and lose his right of citizenship of the United States." *

Had the article said, that *any citizen of the United*

* The actual wording is, "No person holding any office of profit or trust under them [the United States] shall, without the consent of Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign State."—*Editor.*

States, who shall be a member of any foreign convention, for the purpose of forming a free constitution, shall forfeit and lose the right of citizenship of the United States, the article had been directly applicable to me; but the idea of such an article never could have entered the mind of the American Convention, and the present article is altogether foreign to the case with respect to me. It supposes a government in active existence, and not a government dissolved; and it supposes a citizen of America accepting titles and offices under that government, and not a citizen of America who gives his assistance in a convention chosen by the people, for the purpose of forming a government *de nouveau* founded on their authority.

The late Constitution and Government of France was dissolved the tenth of August, 1792. The National Legislative Assembly then in being, supposed itself without sufficient authority to continue its sittings, and it proposed to the departments to elect not another legislative assembly, but a convention for the express purpose of forming a new constitution. When the Assembly were discoursing on this matter, some of the members said, that they wished to gain all the assistance possible upon the subject of free

constitutions; and expressed a wish to elect and invite foreigners of any nation to the Convention, who had distinguished themselves in defending, explaining and propagating the principles of liberty.

It was on this occasion that my name was mentioned in the Assembly. (I was then in England.) After this, a deputation from a body of the French people, in order to remove any objection that might be made against my assisting at the proposed convention, requested the Assembly, as their representatives, to give me the title of French citizen; after which, I was elected a member of the Convention, in four different departments, as is already known.

The case, therefore, is, that I accepted nothing from any king, prince or state, nor from any government: for France was without any government, except what arose from common consent, and the necessity of the case. Neither did *I make myself a servant of the French Republic,* as the letter alluded to expresses; for at that time France was not a republic, not even in name. She was altogether a people in a state of revolution.

It was not until the Convention met that France was declared a republic, and monarchy abolished; soon after which a committee was elected, of which

I was a member,* to form a constitution, which was presented to the Convention [and read by Condorcet, who was also a member] the fifteenth and sixteenth of February following, but was not to be taken into consideration till after the expiration of two months, and if approved of by the Convention, was then to be referred to the people for their acceptance, with such additions or amendments as the Convention should make.

In thus employing myself upon the formation of a constitution, I certainly did nothing inconsistent with the American Constitution. I took no oath of allegiance to France, or any other oath whatever. I considered the citizenship they had presented me with as an honorary mark of respect paid to me not only as a friend to liberty, but as an American citizen. My acceptance of that, or of the deputyship, not conferred on me by any king, prince or state, but by a people in a state of revolution and contending for liberty, required no transfer of my allegiance or of my citizenship from America to France. There I was a real citizen, paying taxes; here, I was a voluntary friend, employing myself on a temporary service. Every American in Paris knew that it was my con-

* Sieyès, Paine, Brissot, Danton, Condorcet, Petion, Barrère, Vergniaud, Gensonne.

stant intention to return to America, as soon as a constitution should be established, and that I anxiously waited for that event.

I know not what opinions have been circulated in America. It may have been supposed there that I had voluntarily and intentionally abandoned America, and that my citizenship had ceased by my own choice. I can easily [believe] there are those in that country who would take such a proceeding on my part somewhat in disgust. The idea of forsaking old friendships for new acquaintances is not agreeable. I am a little warranted in making this supposition by a letter I received some time ago from the wife of one of the Georgia delegates in which she says "Your friends on this side the water cannot be reconciled to the idea of your abandoning America."

I have never abandoned her in thought, word or deed; and I feel it incumbent upon me to give the assurance to the friends I have in that country and with whom I have always intended and am determined, if the possibility exists, to close the scene of my life. It is there that I have made myself a home. It is there that I have given the services of my best days. America never saw me flinch from her cause in the most gloomy and perilous of her situations; and I know there are those in that country who will

not flinch from me. If I have enemies (and every man has some) I leave them to the enjoyment of their ingratitude.*

* I subjoin in a note, for the sake of wasting the solitude of a prison, the answer that I gave to the part of the letter above mentioned. It is not inapplicable to the subject of this Memorial; but it contains somewhat of a melancholy idea, a little predictive, that I hope is not becoming true so soon.

"You touch me on a very tender point when you say that my friends on your side the water cannot be reconciled to the idea of my abandoning America. They are right. I had rather see my horse Button eating the grass of Borden-Town or Morrisania than see all the pomp and show of Europe.

"A thousand years hence (for I must indulge a few thoughts) perhaps in less, America may be what Europe now is. The innocence of her character, that won the hearts of all nations in her favor, may sound like a romance and her inimitable virtues as if it had never been. The ruin of that liberty which thousands bled for or struggled to obtain may just furnish materials for a village tale or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility, while the fashionable of that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall deride the principle and deny the fact.

"When we contemplate the fall of Empires and the extinction of the nations of the Ancient World, we see but little to excite our regret than the mouldering ruins of pompous palaces, magnificent museums, lofty pyramids and walls and towers of the most costly workmanship; but when the Empire of America shall fall, the subject for contemplative sorrow will be infinitely greater than crumbling brass and marble can inspire. It will not then be said, here stood a temple of vast antiquity; here rose a babel of invisible height; or there a palace of sumptuous extravagance; but here, Ah, painful thought! the noblest work of human wisdom, the grandest scene of human glory, the fair cause of Freedom rose and fell. Read this, and then ask if I forget America."—*Author.*

It is somewhat extraordinary that the idea of my not being a citizen of America should have arisen only at the time that I am imprisoned in France because, or on the pretense that, I am a foreigner. The case involves a strange contradiction of ideas. None of the Americans who came to France while I was in liberty had conceived any such idea or circulated any such opinion; and why it should arise now is a matter yet to be explained. However discordant the late American Minister G. M. [Gouverneur Morris] and the late French Committee of Public Safety were, it suited the purpose of both that I should be continued in arrestation. The former wished to prevent my return to America, that I should not expose his misconduct; and the latter, lest I should publish to the world the history of its wickedness. While that Minister and the Committee continued I had no expectation of liberty. I speak here of the Committee of which Robespierre was member.*

I ever must deny, that the article of the American Constitution already mentioned, can be applied either verbally, intentionally, or constructively, to me. It undoubtedly was the intention of the Convention that

* Obviously Paine was beginning to suspect a conspiracy between Gouverneur Morris and those by whom he was imprisoned. —*Editor.*

framed it, to preserve the purity of the American Republic from being debased by foreign and foppish customs; but it never could be its intention to act against the principles of liberty, by forbidding its citizens to assist in promoting those principles in foreign countries; neither could it be its intention to act against the principles of gratitude.

France had aided America in the establishment of her revolution, when invaded and oppressed by England and her auxiliaries. France in her turn was invaded and oppressed by a combination of foreign despots. In this situation, I conceived it an act of gratitude in me, as a citizen of America, to render her in return the best services I could perform.

I came to France (for I was in England when I received the invitation) not to enjoy ease, emoluments and foppish honors, as the article supposes; but to encounter difficulties and dangers in defense of liberty; and I must question whether those who now malignantly seek (for some I believe do) to turn this to my injury, would have had courage to have done the same thing. I am sure Gouverneur Morris would not. He told me the second day after my arrival (in Paris), that the Austrians and Prussians, who were then at Verdun, would be in Paris in a fort-

night. "I have no idea," said he, "that seventy thousand disciplined troops can be stopped in their march by any power in France."

Besides the reasons I have already given for accepting the invitations to the Convention, I had another that has reference particularly to America, and which I mentioned to Mr. Pinckney the night before I left London to come to Paris: "That it was to the interest of America that the system of European governments should be changed and placed on the same principle with her own." Mr. Pinckney agreed fully in the same opinion. I have done my part toward it.

It is certain that governments upon similar systems agree better together than those that are founded on principles discordant with each other; and the same rule holds good with respect to the people living under them. In the latter case they offend each other by pity, or by reproach; and the discordancy carries itself to matters of commerce. I am not an ambitious man, but perhaps I have been an ambitious American. I have wished to see America the *Mother Church* of government, and I have done my utmost to exalt her character and her condition.

I have now stated sufficient matter to show that the article in question is not applicable to me; and

that any such application to my injury, as well in circumstances as in right, is contrary both to the letter and intention of that article, and is illegal and unconstitutional. Neither do I believe that any jury in America, when they are informed of the whole of the case, would give a verdict to deprive me of my rights upon that article. The citizens of America, I believe, are not very fond of permitting forced and indirect explanations to be put upon matters of this kind.

I know not what were the merits of the case with respect to the person who was prosecuted for acting as prize master to a French privateer, but I know that the jury gave a verdict against the prosecution. The rights I have acquired are dear to me. They have been acquired by honorable means, and by dangerous service in the worst of times, and I cannot passively permit them to be wrested from me. I conceive it my duty to defend them, as the case involves a constitutional and public question, which is, how far the power of the Federal Government extends, in depriving any citizen of his rights of citizenship, or of suspending them.

That the explanation of national treaties belongs to Congress is strictly constitutional; but not the

explanation of the Constitution itself, any more than the explanation of law in the case of individual citizens. These are altogether judiciary questions. It is, however, worth observing, that Congress, in explaining the article of the treaty with respect to French prizes and French privateers, confined itself strictly to the letter of the article. Let them explain the article of the Constitution with respect to me in the same manner, and the decision, did it appertain to them, could not deprive me of my rights of citizenship, or suspend them, for I have accepted nothing from any king, prince, state or government.

You will please observe that I speak as if the Federal Government had made some declaration upon the subject of my citizenship; whereas the fact is otherwise; and your saying that you have in order respecting me is a proof of it. Those therefore who propagate the report of my not being considered as a citizen of America by Government, do it to the prolongation of my imprisonment, and without authority; for Congress, *as a government,* has neither decided upon it, nor yet taken the matter into consideration; and I request you to caution such persons against spreading such reports. But be these matters as they may, I cannot have a doubt that you will

find and feel the case very different, since you have heard what I have to say, and known what my situation is [better] than you did before your arrival.

But it was not the Americans only, but the Convention also, that knew what my intentions were upon that subject. In my last discourse delivered at the Tribune of the Convention, January 19, 1793, on the motion for suspending the execution of Louis XVI, I said (the Deputy Bancal read the translation in French):

"It unfortunately happens that the person who is the subject of the present discussion, is considered by the Americans as having been the friend of their revolution. His execution will be an affliction to them, and it is in your power not to wound the feelings of your ally. Could I speak the French language I would descend to your bar, and in their name become your petitioner to respite the execution of the sentence.

"As the Convention was elected for the express purpose of forming a Constitution, its continuance cannot be longer than four or five months more at furthest; and, if after my *return to America,* I should employ myself in writing the history of the French Revolution, I had rather record a thousand errors

on the side of mercy than be obliged to tell one act of severe justice.

"Ah citizens! give not the tyrant of England the triumph of seeing the man perish on a scaffold who had aided my much-loved America."

Does this look as if I had abandoned America? But if she abandons me in the situation I am in, to gratify the enemies of humanity, let that disgrace be to herself. But I know the people of America better than to believe it, though I undertake not to answer for every individual.

When this discourse was pronounced, Marat launched himself into the middle of the hall and said that "I voted against the punishment of death because I was a Quaker." I replied that "I voted against it both morally and politically."

I certainly went a great way, considering the rage of the times, in endeavoring to prevent that execution. I had many reasons for so doing. I judged, and events have shown that I judged rightly, that if they once began shedding blood, there was no knowing where it would end; and as to what the world might call *honor*, the execution would appear like a nation killing a mouse; and in a political view, would serve to transfer the hereditary claim to some more formidable enemy. The man could do no more mischief;

and that which he had done was not only from the vice of his education, but was as much the fault of the nation in restoring him after he had absconded June 21, 1791, as it was his.

I made the proposal for imprisonment until the end of the war and perpetual banishment after the war, instead of the punishment of death. Upwards of three hundred members voted for that proposal. The sentence for absolute death (for some members had voted the punishment of death conditionally) was carried by a majority of twenty-five out of more than seven hundred.

I return from this digression to the proper subject of my memorial.

Painful as the want of liberty may be, it is a consolation to me to believe that my imprisonment proves to the world that I had no share in the murderous system that then reigned. That I was an enemy to it, both morally and politically, is known to all who had any knowledge of me; and could I have written French as well as I can English, I would publicly have exposed its wickedness and shown the ruin with which it was pregnant. They who have esteemed me on former occasions, whether in America or in Europe, will, I know, feel no cause to abate that esteem, when they reflect that *imprisonment with pres-*

ervation of character is preferable to liberty with disgrace.

I here close my memorial and proceed to offer you a proposal that appears to me suited to all the circumstances of the case; which is that you reclaim me conditionally, until the opinion of Congress can be obtained on the subject of my citizenship of America; and that I remain in liberty under your protection during that time.

I found this proposal upon the following grounds:

First, you say you have no orders respecting me; consequently, you have no orders *not* to reclaim me; and in this case you are left discretionary judge whether to reclaim or not. My proposal therefore unites a consideration of your situation with my own.

Secondly, I am put in arrestation because I am a foreigner. It is therefore necessary to determine to what country I belong. The right of determining this question cannot appertain exclusively to the Committee of Public Safety or General Surety; because I appeal to the Minister of the United States, and show that my citizenship of that country is good and valid, referring at the same time, through the agency of the Minister, my claim of right to the opinion of Congress. It being a matter between two governments.

Thirdly. France does not claim me for a citizen; neither do I set up any claim of citizenship in France. The question is simply whether I am or am not a citizen of America. I am imprisoned here on the decree for imprisoning foreigners because, say they, I was born in England.

I say in answer that, though born in England, I am not a subject of the English Government any more than any other American who was born, as they all were, under the same government, or than the citizens of France are subjects of the French monarchy under which they were born. I have twice taken the oath of abjuration to the British King and Government and of allegiance to America—once as a citizen of the State of Pennsylvania in 1776, and again before Congress, administered to me by the President, Mr. Hancock, when I was appointed Secretary in the office of Foreign Affairs in 1777.

The letter before quoted in the first page of this memorial, says, "It would be out of character for an American Minister to interfere in the internal affairs of France." This goes on the idea that I am a citizen of France, and a member of the Convention, which is not the fact. The Convention have declared me to be a foreigner; and consequently the citizenship and the election are null and void. It also

has the appearance of a decision, that the article of the Constitution, respecting grants made to American citizens by foreign kings, princes or states, is applicable to me; which is the very point in question, and against the application of which I contend.

I state evidence to the Minister, to show that I am not within the letter or meaning of that article; that it cannot operate against me; and I apply to him for the protection that I conceive I have a right to ask and to receive. The internal affairs of France are out of the question with respect to my application or his interference. I ask it not as a citizen of France, for I am not one:

I ask it not as a member of the Convention, for I am not one; both these, as before said, have been rendered null and void; I ask it not as a man against whom there is any accusation, for there is none; I ask it not as an exile from America, whose liberties I have honorably and generously contributed to establish; I ask it as a citizen of America, deprived of his liberty in France, under the plea of being a foreigner; and I ask it because I conceive I am entitled to it upon every principle of constitutional justice and national honor.

But though I thus positively assert my claim because I believe I have a right to do so, it is perhaps

most eligible, in the present situation of things, to put that claim upon the footing I have already mentioned; that is, that the Minister reclaims me conditionally until the opinion of Congress can be obtained on the subject of my citizenship of America, and that I remain in liberty under the protection of the Minister during that interval.

(Signed) THOMAS PAINE.

N.B. I should have added that as Gouverneur Morris could not inform Congress of the cause of my arrestation, as he knew it not himself, it is to be supposed that Congress was not enough acquainted with the case to give any directions respecting me when you came away.

T. P.

ADDENDA

1.

DATED LUXEMBOURG 14EM VENDÉMIAIRE, OLD STYLE OCTOBER 4, 1794.

THE accompanying letters were written by Paine to Monroe subsequent to the Memorial and before his release from the Luxembourg prison on November 4, 1794. The delay of sixteen days in the transmission of Monroe's reassuring letter to Paine was due to the machinations of Paine's enemies on the Committee of Public Safety. He was released only after their removal from the Committee, and the departure from Paris of Gouverneur Morris.

Presently Monroe received from Edmund J. Randolph, who had succeeded Jefferson as Secretary of State in Washington's Cabinet, a letter, dated July 30, which stated: "We have heard with regret that several of our citizens have been thrown into prison in France. . . . If they are guilty we are extremely sorry; if innocent we must protect them." Thus encouraged, Monroe demanded Paine's release as an American citizen—and the prison door flew open.

DEAR SIR: I thank you for your very friendly and affectionate letter of the eighteenth of September which I did not receive till this morning. It has relieved my mind from a load of disquietude. You will easily suppose that if the information I received had been exact, my situation was without hope. I had in that case neither section, department nor country, to reclaim me; but that is not all; I felt a poignancy of grief, in having the least reason to suppose that America had so soon forgotten me who had never forgotten her.

Mr. Labonadaire, in a note of yesterday, directed me to write to the Convention. As I suppose this measure has been taken in concert with you, I have requested him to show you the letter, of which he will make a translation to accompany the original.

(I cannot see what motive can induce them to keep me in prison. It will gratify the English Government and afflict the friends I have in America. The supporters of the system of terror might apprehend that if I was in liberty and in America I should publish the history of their crimes, but the present persons who have overset that immoral system ought to have no such apprehension. On the contrary, they ought to consider me as one of themselves, at least as one of their friends. Had I been an insignificant character I had not been in arrestation. It was the literary and philosophical reputation I had gained in the world that made them my enemies; and I am the victim of the principles and, if I may be permitted to say it, of the talents, that procured me the esteem of America. My character is the *secret* of my arrestation.)

If the letter I have written be not covered by other authority than my own it will have no effect, for they already know all that I can say. On what ground do they pretend to deprive America of the service of any

of her citizens without assigning a cause, or only the flimsy one of my being born in England? Gates, were he here, might be arrested on the same pretense, and he and Burgoyne be confounded together.

It is difficult for me to give an opinion, but among other things that occur to me, I think that if you were to say that, as it will be necessary to you to inform the Government of America of my situation, you require an explanation with the Committee upon that subject; that you are induced to make this proposal not only out of esteem for the character of the person who is the personal object of it, but because you know that his arrestation will distress the Americans, and the more so as it will appear to them to be contrary to their ideas of civil and national justice, it might perhaps have some effect.

If the Committee [of Public Safety] will do nothing, it will be necessary to bring this matter openly before the Convention, for I do most sincerely assure you, from the observations that I hear and I suppose the same are made in other places, that the character of America lies under some reproach.

All the world knows that I have served her, and they see that I am still in prison; and you know that when people can form a conclusion upon a simple fact they trouble not themselves about reasons. I

had rather that America cleared herself of all suspicion of ingratitude, though I were to be the victim.

You advise me to have patience, but I am fully persuaded that the longer I continue in prison the more difficult will be my liberation. There are two reasons for this: the one is that the present Committee, by continuing so long my imprisonment, will naturally suppose that my mind will be soured against them, as it was against those who put me in, and they will continue my imprisonment from the same apprehensions as the former Committee did; the other reason is, that it is now about two months since your arrival, and I am still in prison. They will explain this into an indifference upon my fate that will encourage them to continue my imprisonment.

When I hear some people say that it is the Government of America that now keeps me in prison by not reclaiming me, and then pour forth a volley of execrations against her, I know not how to answer them otherwise than by a direct denial which they do not appear to believe.

You will easily conclude that whatever relates to imprisonments and liberations makes a topic of prison conversation; and as I am now the oldest inhabitant within these walls, except two or three, I am often the subject of their remarks, because from

the continuance of my imprisonment they augur ill to themselves. You see I write you everything that occurs to me, and I conclude with thanking you again for your very friendly and affectionate letter, and am with great respect

Yours affectionately,

THOMAS PAINE.

(To-day is the anniversary of the action at Germantown. [October 4, 1777.] Your letter has enabled me to contradict the observations before mentioned.)

2.

October 13, 1794.

DEAR SIR: On the twenty-eighth of this month (October) I shall have suffered ten months' imprisonment, to the dishonor of America as well as of myself, and I speak to you very honestly, when I say that my patience is exhausted. It is only my actual liberation that can make me believe it. Had any person told me that I should remain in prison two months after the arrival of a new Minister, I should have supposed that he meant to affront me as an American. By the friendship and sympathy you express in your letter you seem to consider my imprisonment as having connection only with myself, but I am certain that

the inferences that follow from it have relation also to the national character of America. I already feel this in myself, for I no longer speak with pride of being a citizen of that country. Is it possible, sir, that I should, when I am suffering unjust imprisonment under the very eye of her new Minister?

While there was no Minister here (for I consider Morris as none) nobody wondered at my imprisonment, but now everybody wonders. The continuance of it under a change of diplomatic circumstances subjects me to the suspicion of having merited it, and also to the suspicion of having forfeited my reputation with America; and it subjects her at the same time to the suspicion of ingratitude, or to the reproach of wanting national or diplomatic importance.

The language that some Americans have held of my not being considered as an American citizen, though contradicted by yourself, proceeds, I believe, from no other motive than the shame and dishonor they feel at the imprisonment of a fellow-citizen, and they adopt this apology, at my expense, to get rid of that disgrace.

Is it not enough that I suffer imprisonment, but my mind also must be wounded and tortured with subjects of this kind? Did I reason from personal considerations only, independent of principles and

the pride of having practised those principles honorably, I should be tempted to curse the day I knew America. By contributing to her liberty I have lost my own, and yet her Government beholds my situation in silence.

Wonder not, Sir, at the ideas I express or the language in which I express them. If I have a heart to feel for others I can feel also for myself, and if I have anxiety for my own honor, I have it also for a country whose suffering infancy I endeavored to nourish and to which I have been enthusiastically attached. As to patience I have practised it long—as long as it was honorable to do so, and when it goes beyond that point it becomes meanness.

I am inclined to believe that you have attended to my imprisonment more as a friend than a Minister. As a friend I thank you for your affectionate attachment. As a Minister you have to look beyond me to the honor and reputation of your Government; and your countrymen, who have accustomed themselves to consider any subject in one line of thinking only, more especially if it makes a strong [impression] upon them, as I believe my situation has made upon you, do not immediately see the matters that have relation to it in another line; and it is to bring these two into one point that I offer you these observations.

A citizen and his country, in a case like mine, are so closely connected that the case of one is the case of both.

When you first arrived, the path you had to pursue with respect to my liberation was simple. I was imprisoned as a foreigner; you knew that foreigner to be a citizen of America, and you knew also his character, and as such you should immediately have reclaimed him. You could lose nothing by taking strong ground, but you might lose much by taking an inferior one; but instead of this, which I conceive would have been the right line of acting, you left me in their hands on the loose intimation that my liberation would take place without your direct interference, and you strongly recommended it to me to wait the issue. This is more than seven weeks ago and I am still in prison. I suspect these people are trifling with you, and if they once believe they can do that, you will not easily get any business done except what they wish to have done.

When I take a review of my whole situation—my circumstances ruined, my health half destroyed, my person imprisoned, and the prospect of imprisonment still staring me in the face, can you wonder at the agony of my feelings? You lie down in safety and rise to plenty; it is otherwise with me; I am deprived

of more than half the common necessaries of life; I have not a candle to burn and cannot get one. Fuel can be procured only in small quantities and that with great difficulty and very dear, and to add to the rest, I am fallen into a relapse and am again on the sick list.

Did you feel the whole force of what I suffer, and the disgrace put upon America by this injustice done to one of her best and most affectionate citizens, you would not, either as a friend or minister, rest a day till you had procured my liberation. It is the work of two or three hours when you set heartily about it, that is, when you demand me as an American citizen, or propose a conference with the Committee upon that subject; or you may make it the work of a twelve-month and not succeed. I know these people better than you do.

You desire me to believe that "you are placed here on a difficult theater with many important objects to attend to, and with but few to consult with, and that it becomes you in pursuit of these to regulate your conduct with respect to each, as to manner and time, as will in your judgment be best calculated to accomplish the whole."

As I know not what these objects are I can say nothing to that point. But I have always been taught

to believe that the liberty of a citizen was the first object of all free governments, and that it ought not to give preference to, or be blended with, any other. It is that public object that all the world can see, and which obtains an influence upon public opinion more than any other.

This is not the case with the objects you allude to. But be those objects what they may, can you suppose you will accomplish them the easier by holding me in the background, or making me only an accident in the negotiation? Those with whom you confer will conclude from thence that you do not feel yourself very strong upon those points, and that you politically keep me out of sight in the meantime to make your approach the easier.

There is one part in your letter that it is equally as proper should be communicated to the Committee as to me, and which I conceive you are under some diplomatic obligation to do. It is that part which you conclude by saying that "*to the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not and cannot be indifferent.*" As it is impossible the Americans can preserve their esteem for me and for my oppressors at the same time, the injustice to me strikes at the popular part of the Treaty of Alliance.

If it be the wish of the Committee to reduce the treaty to a mere skeleton of government forms, they are taking the right method to do it, and it is not improbable they will blame you afterward for not informing them upon the subject. The disposition to retort has been so notorious here, that you ought to be guarded against it at all points.

You say in your letter that you doubt whether the gentleman who informed me of the language held by some Americans respecting my citizenship of America conveyed even his own ideas clearly upon the subject.* I know not how this may be, but I believe he told me the truth.

I received a letter a few days ago from a friend and former comrade of mine in which he tells me, that all the Americans he converses with say that I should have been in liberty long ago if the Minister could have reclaimed me as an American citizen. When I compare this with the counter-declarations in your letter I can explain the case no otherwise than I have already done, that it is an apology to get rid of the shame and dishonor they feel at the imprison-

* Referring to the Peter Whiteside letter to Paine which inspired his Memorial to Monroe. This letter from Paine to Monroe suggests that it was not known by Americans in Paris that Monroe had been kept out of office by Morris nearly a month after his arrival in Paris.—*Editor.*

ment of an American citizen, and because they are not willing it should be supposed there is want of influence in the American Embassy. But they ought to see that this language is injurious to me.

On the second of this month Vendémiaire I received a line from Mr. Beresford in which he tells me I shall be in liberty in two or three days, and that he has this for good authority. On the twelfth I received a note from Mr. Labonadaire, written at the Bureau of the Concierge, in which he tells me of the interest you take in procuring my liberation, and that after the steps that had been already taken that I ought to write to the Convention to demand my liberty *purely* and *simply* as a citizen of the United States of America. He advised me to send the letter to him, and he would translate it. I sent the letter, inclosing at the same time a letter to you. I have heard nothing since of the letter to the Convention.

On the seventeenth I received a letter from my former comrade Vanhuele, in which he says, "I am just come from Mr. Russell, who had yesterday a conversation with your Minister and your liberation is certain—you will be in liberty to-morrow." Vanhuele also adds, "I find the advice of Mr. Labonadaire good, for though you have some enemies in the

Convention, the strongest and best part are in your favor."

But the case is, and I felt it while I was writing the letter to the Convention that there is an awkwardness in my appearing, you being present; for every foreigner should apply through his Minister, or rather his Minister for him.

When I thus see day after day and month after month, and promise after promise, pass away without effect, what can I conclude but that either the Committees are secretly determined not to let me go, or that the measures you take are not pursued with the vigor necessary to give them effect; or that the American national character is without sufficient importance in the French Republic? The latter will be gratifying to the English Government. In short, Sir, the case is now arrived to that crisis, that for the sake of your own reputation as a Minister you ought to require a positive answer from the Committee.

As to myself, it is more agreeable to me now to contemplate an honorable destruction, and to perish in the act of protesting against the injustice I suffer, and to caution the people of America against confiding too much in the Treaty of Alliance, violated as it has been in every principle, and in my imprisonment though an American citizen, than remain in the

wretched condition I am. I am no longer of any use to the world or to myself.

There was a time when I beheld the Revolution of the tenth Thermidor [the fall of Robespierre] with enthusiasm. It was the first news my comrade Vanhuele communicated to me during my illness, and it contributed to my recovery. But there is still something rotten at the center, and the enemies that I have, though perhaps not numerous, are more active than my friends. If I form a wrong opinion of men or things it is to you I must look to set me right. You are in possession of the secret. I know nothing of it. But that I may be guarded against as many wants as possible I shall set about writing a memorial to Congress, another to the State of Pennsylvania, and an address to the people of America; but it will be difficult for me to finish these until I know from yourself what applications you have made for my liberation, and what answers you have received.

Ah, Sir, you would have gotten a load of trouble and difficulties off your hands that I fear will multiply every day had you made it a point to procure my liberty when you first arrived, and not left me floating on the promises of men whom you did not know. You were then a new character. You had come in consequence of their own request that Morris should

be recalled; and had you then, before you opened any subject of negotiation that might arise into controversy, demanded my liberty either as a civility or as a right I see not how they could have refused it.

I have already said that after all the promises that have been made I am still in prison. I am in the dark upon all the matters that relate to myself. I know not if it be to the Convention, to the Committee of Public Safety, of General Surety, or to the deputies who come sometimes to the Luxembourg to examine and put persons in liberty, that applications have been made for my liberation. But be it to whom it may, my earnest and pressing request to you as Minister is that you will bring this matter to a conclusion by reclaiming me as an American citizen imprisoned in France under the plea of being a foreigner born in England; that I may know the result, and how to prepare the memorials I have mentioned, should there be occasion for them.

The right of determining who are American citizens can belong only to America. The Convention have declared I am not a French citizen because she has declared me to be a foreigner, and have by that declaration cancelled and annulled the vote of the former assembly that conferred the title of citizen upon citizens or subjects of other countries. I should

not be honest to you nor to myself were I not to express myself as I have done in this letter, and I confide and request you will accept it in that sense and in no other.

I am, with great respect, your suffering fellow-citizen, THOMAS PAINE.

P.S.—If my imprisonment is to continue, and I indulge very little hope to the contrary, I shall be under the absolute necessity of applying to you for a supply of several articles. Every person here have their families or friends upon the spot who make provision for them. This is not the case with me; I have no person I can apply to but the American Minister, and I can have no doubt that if events should prevent my repaying the expense Congress or the State of Pennsylvania will discharge it for me.

To-day is twenty-two Vendémiaire, Monday, October thirteenth, but you will not receive this letter till the fourteenth. I will send the bearer to you again on the fifteenth, Wednesday, and I will be obliged to you to send me for the present, three or four candles, a little sugar of any kind, and some soap for shaving; and I should be glad at the same time to receive a line from you and a memorandum of the articles. Were I in your place I would order a hogshead of sugar, some

boxes of candles and soap from America, for they will become still more scarce. Perhaps the best method for you to procure them at present is by applying to the American consuls at Bordeaux and Havre, and have them up by the diligence.

3.

[Undated.]

DEAR SIR: As I have not yet received any answer to my last, I have amused myself with writing you the enclosed memoranda. Though you recommend patience to me I cannot but feel very pointedly the uncomfortableness of my situation, and among other reflections that occur to me I cannot think that America receives any credit from the long imprisonment that I suffer. It has the appearance of neglecting her citizens and her friends and of encouraging the insults of foreign nations upon them and upon her commerce. My imprisonment is as well and perhaps more known in England than in France, and they (the English) will not be intimidated from molesting an American ship when they see that one of her best citizens (for I have a right to call myself so) can be imprisoned in another country at the mere discretion of a committee, because he is a foreigner.

When you first arrived everybody congratulated me that I should soon, if not immediately, be in liberty. Since that time about two hundred have been set free from this prison on the applications of their sections or of individuals—and I am continually hurt by the observations that are made—"that a section in Paris has more influence than America."

It is right that I furnish you with these circumstances. It is the effect of my anxiety that the character of America suffer no reproach; for the world knows that I have acted a generous duty by her. I am the third American that has been imprisoned. Griffiths nine weeks, Haskins about five, and myself eight [months] and yet in prison. With respect to the two former there was then no Minister, for I consider Morris as none; and they were liberated on the applications of the Americans in Paris. As to myself I had rather be publicly and honorably reclaimed, though the reclamation was refused, than remain in the uncertain situation that I am. Though my health has suffered my spirits are not broken. I have nothing to fear unless innocence and fortitude be crimes.

America, whatever may be my fate, will have no cause to blush for me as a citizen; I hope I shall have none to blush for her as a country.

If, my dear Sir, there is anything in the perplexity of ideas I have mistaken, only suppose yourself in my situation, and you will easily find an excuse for it. I need not say how much I shall rejoice to pay my respects to you without-side the walls of this prison, and to inquire after my American friends. But I know that nothing can be accomplished here but by unceasing perseverance and application. Yours affectionately.

4.

October 20, 1794.

DEAR SIR: I received your friendly letter of the twenty-sixth Vendémiaire on the day it was written, and I thank you for communicating to me your opinion upon my case. Ideas serve to beget ideas, and as it is from a review of everything that can be said upon a subject, or is any ways connected with it, that the best judgment can be formed how to proceed, I present you with such ideas as occur to me. I am sure of one thing, which is that you will give them a patient and attentive perusal.

You say in your letter that "I must be sensible that although I am an American citizen, yet if you interfere in my behalf as the minister of my country you

must demand my liberation only in case there be no charge against me; and that if there is I must be brought to trial previously, since no person in a *private* character can be exempt from the laws of the country in which he resides." This is what I have twice attempted to do. I wrote a letter on the third Sans Culottodi to the deputies, members of the Committee of Surety General, who came to the Luxembourg to examine the persons detained. The letter was as follows:

"Citizens Representatives: I offer myself for examination. Justice is due to every man. It is justice only that I ask.—THOMAS PAINE."

As I was not called for examination, nor heard anything in consequence of my letter the first time of sending it, I sent a duplicate of it a few days after. It was carried to them by my good friend and comrade Vanhuele, who was then going in liberty, having been examined the day before. Vanhuele wrote me on the next day and said: "Bourdon de l'Oise [who was one of the examining deputies] is the most inveterate enemy you can have. The answer he gave me when I presented your letter put me in such a passion with him that I expected I should be sent back again to prison." I then wrote a third letter but had not an opportunity of sending it, as Bourdon did not come

any more till after I received Mr. Labonadaire's letter advising me to write to the Convention. The letter was as follows:

"Citizens, I have twice offered myself for examination, and I chose to do this while Bourdon de l'Oise was one of the commissioners. This deputy has said in the Convention that I intrigued with an ancient agent of the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. My examination therefore while he is present will give him an opportunity of proving his charge or of convincing himself of his error. If Bourdon de l'Oise is an honest man he will examine me, but lest he should not I subjoin the following. That which B[ourdon] calls an intrigue was at the request of a member of the former Committee of Salut Public; last August was a twelve-month. I met the member on the Boulevard. He asked me something in French which I did not understand and we went together to the Bureau of Foreign Affairs, which was near at hand. The agent (Otto, whom you probably knew in America) served as interpreter.

"The member (it was Barrère) then asked me first, if I could furnish him with the plan of Constitution I had presented to the Committee of Constitution, of which I was member with himself, because, he said, it contained several things which he wished had been

adopted: secondly, he asked me my opinion upon sending commissioners to the United States of America: thirdly, if fifty or an hundred ship loads of flour could be procured from America.

"As verbal interpretation was tedious, it was agreed that I should give him my opinion in writing, and that the agent [Otto] should translate it, which he did. I answered the first question by sending him the plan, [of a constitution] which he still has. To the second, I replied that I thought it would be proper to send commissioners, because that in revolutions circumstances change so fast that it was often necessary to send a better supply of information to an ally than could be communicated by writing; and that Congress had done the same thing during the American war; and I gave him some information that the commissioners would find useful on their arrival.

"I answered the third question by sending him a list of American exports two years before, distinguishing the several articles by which he would see that the supply he mentioned could be obtained. I sent him also the plan of Paul Jones, giving it as his, for procuring saltpeter, which was to send a squadron (it did not require a large one) to take possession of the Island of St. Helen's, to keep the English flag flying at the port, that the English East India ships coming

Thomas Paine to George Washington,
President of the United States

Original letter is dated London, February 13, 1792, reads as follows:

Sir: An opportunity immediately offering, I have had a dozen copies of my new work put up for the purpose (the work being not yet published) to present to you and Mr. Jefferson. I hope the fifty copies which were sent to Portsmouth (England) to the care of Mr. Greene, of my former work have come safe to your hands.

Wishing you every happiness
I remain your much obliged
obedient humble servant,
Thomas Paine.

This letter is in the possession of J. Pierpont Morgan of New York and it is one of the treasures of the Morgan collection.

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Wishing you every happiness
I remain your much obliged
obedient humble servant,
Thomas Paine.

This letter is in the possession of J. Pierpont Morgan of New York and it is one of the treasures of the Morgan collection.

London Feb^ry 13th 1792

Sir

An opportunity immediately offering, I have had a Dog Copies of my new Work put up for the purpose (the work being not yet published) to present to you and Mr Jefferson. I hope the fifty Copies which were sent to Portsmouth (Eryland) to the Care of Mr. Greene of my former work, have come safe to your hands

Wishing you every happiness

I remain your much obliged

Obedient Hble Servant

Thomas Paine

George Washington
President of the
United States

from the East Indies, and that ballast with saltpeter, might be induced to enter as usual; and that it would be a considerable time before the English Government could know of what had happened at St. Helen's. See here what Bourdon de l'Oise has called an intrigue.

"If it was an intrigue it was between a Committee of Salut Public and myself, for the agent was no more than the interpreter and translator, and the object of the intrigue was to furnish France with flour and saltpeter."

I suppose Bourdon had heard that the agent and I were seen together talking English, and this was enough for *him* to found his charge upon.

You next say that "I must likewise be sensible that although I am an American citizen that it is likewise believed there [in America] that I am become a citizen of France, and that in consequence this latter character has so far [*illegible*] the former as to weaken if not destroy any claim you might have to interpose in my behalf."

I am sorry I cannot add any new arguments to those I have already advanced on this part of the subject. But I cannot help asking myself, and I wish you would ask the Committee, if it could possibly be the intention of France to *kidnap* citizens from America under the pretense of dubbing them with the title of French

citizens, and then, after inviting or rather inveigling them into France, make it a pretense for detaining them? If it was (which I am sure it was not, though they now act as if it was), the insult was to America, though the injury was to me, and the treachery was to both. Did they mean to kidnap General Washington, Mr. Madison, and several other Americans whom they dubbed with the same title as well as me?

Let any man look at the condition of France when I arrived in it—invaded by Austrians and Prussians and declared to be in danger—and then ask if any man who had a home and a country to go to, as I had in America, would have come amongst them from any other motive than of assisting them. If I could possibly have supposed them capable of treachery I certainly would not have trusted myself in their power. Instead therefore of your being unwilling or apprehensive of meeting the question of French citizenship, they ought to be ashamed of advancing it, and this will be the case unless you admit their arguments or objections too passively. It is a case on their part fit only for the continuations of Robespierre to set up.

As to the name of French citizen, I never considered it in any other light, so far as regarded myself, than as a token of honorary respect. I never made

them any promise nor took any oath of allegiance or of citizenship, nor bound myself by any act or means whatever to the performance of anything. I acted altogether as a friend invited among them as I supposed on honorable terms. I did not come to join myself to a government already formed, but to assist in forming one *de nouveau,* which was afterwards to be submitted to the people whether they would accept it or not, and this any foreigner might do. And strictly speaking there are no citizens before this is a government. They are all of the people. The Americans were not called citizens till after government was established, and not even then until they had taken the oath of allegiance. This was the case in Pennsylvania.

But be this French citizenship more or less, the Convention have swept it away by declaring me to be a foreigner, and imprisoning me as such; and this is a short answer to all those who affect to say or to believe that I am French citizen. A citizen without citizenship is a term nondescript.

After the two preceding paragraphs you ask—"If it be my wish that you should embark in this controversy (meaning that of reclaiming me) and risk the consequences with respect to myself and the good understanding subsisting between the two countries,

or, without relinquishing any point of right, and which might be insisted on in case of extremities, pursue according to your best judgment and with the light before you, the object of my liberation?"

As I believe from the apparent obstinacy of the Committees that circumstances will grow toward the extremity you mention, unless prevented beforehand, I will endeavor to throw into your hands all the lights I can upon the subject.

In the first place, reclamation may mean two distinct things. All the reclamations that are made by the sections in behalf of persons detained as *suspect* are made on the ground that the persons so detained are patriots, and the reclamation is good against the charge of "suspect" because it proves the contrary.

But my situation includes another circumstance. I am imprisoned on the charge (if it can be called one) of being a foreigner born in England. You know that foreigner to be a citizen of the United States of America, and that he has been such since the fourth of July, 1776, the political birthday of the United States, and of every American citizen, for before that period all were British subjects, and the States, then provinces, were British dominions.

Your reclamation of me therefore as a citizen of the United States (all other considerations apart) is

good against the pretense for imprisoning me, or that pretense is equally good against every American citizen born in England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany or Holland, and you know this description of men compose a very great part of the population of the three states of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and make also a part of Congress, and of the state legislatures.

Every politician ought to know, and every civilian does know, that the Law of Treaty of Alliance, and also that of Amity and Commerce, knows no distinction of American citizens on account of the place of their birth, but recognizes all to be citizens whom the Constitution and laws of the United States of America recognize as such; and if I recollect rightly there is an article in the Treaty of Commerce particular to this point. The law therefore which they have here, to put all persons in arrestation born in any of the countries at war with France, is, when applied to citizens of America born in England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany or Holland, a violation of the treaties of Alliance and of Commerce, because it assumes to make a distinction of citizens which those treaties and the Constitution of America know nothing of. This is a subject that officially comes under your cogni-

zance as Minister, and it would be consistent that you expostulated with them upon the case.

That foolish old man Vadier, who was president of the Convention and of the Committee of Surety General when the Americans then in Paris went to the bar of the Convention to reclaim me, gave them for answer that my being born in England was cause sufficient for imprisoning me. It happened that at least half those who went up with that address were in the same case with myself.

As to reclamations on the ground of patriotism it is difficult to know what is to be understood by patriotism here. There is not a vice, and scarcely a virtue, that has not as the fashion of the moment suited been called by the name of patriotism. The wretches who composed the revolutionary tribunal of Nantes were the patriots of that day and the criminals of this. The Jacobins called themselves patriots of the first order, men up to the height of the circumstances, and they are now considered as an antidote to patriotism. But if we give to patriotism a fixed idea consistent with that of a republic, it would signify a strict adherence to the principles of moral justice, to the equality of civil and political rights, to the system of representative government, and an opposition to every heredi-

tary claim to govern; and of this species of patriotism you know my character.

But, Sir, there are men on the Committee who have changed their party but not their principles. Their aim is to hold power as long as possible by preventing the establishment of a Constitution, and these men are and will be my enemies, and seek to hold me in prison as long as they can. I am too good a patriot for them. It is not improbable that they have heard of the strange language held by some Americans that I am not considered in America as an American citizen, and they may also have heard say, that you had no orders respecting me, and it is not improbable that they interpret that language and that silence into a connivance at my imprisonment.

If they had not some ideas of this kind would they resist so long the civil efforts you make for my liberation, or would they attach so much importance to the imprisonment of an individual as *to risk* (as you say to me) *the good understanding that exists between the two countries?* You also say that *it is impossible for any person to do more than you have done without adopting the other means,* meaning that of reclaiming me. How then can you account for the want of success after so many efforts, and such a length of time, upwards of ten weeks, without supposing that

they fortify themselves in the interpretation I have just mentioned?

I can admit that it was not necessary to give orders, and that it was difficult to give direct orders, for I much question if Morris had informed Congress or the President of the whole of the case, or had sent copies of my letters to him as I had desired him to do. You would find the case here when you came, and you could not fully understand it till you did come, and as Minister you would have authority to act upon it. But as you inform me that you know what the wishes of the President are, you will see also that his reputation is exposed to some risk, admitting there to be ground for the supposition I have made.

It will not add to his popularity to have it believed in America, as I am inclined to think the Committee believe here, that he connives at my imprisonment. You say also that *it is known to everybody that you wish my liberation.* It is, Sir, because they know your wishes that they misinterpret the means you use. They suppose that those mild means arise from a restriction that you cannot use others, or from a consciousness of some defect on my part of which you are unwilling to provoke the inquiry.

But as you ask me if it be my wish that you should embark in this controversy and risk the consequences

with respect to myself, I will answer this part of the question by marking out precisely the part I wish you to take. What I mean is a sort of middle line above what you have yet gone, and not up to the full extremity of the case, which will still lie in reserve. It is to write a letter to the Committee that shall in the first place defeat by anticipation all the objections they might make to a simple reclamation, and at the same time make the ground good for that object. But, instead of sending the letter immediately, to invite some of the Committee to your house and to make that invitation the opportunity of showing them the letter, expressing at the same time a wish that you had done this from a hope that the business might be settled in an amicable manner without your being forced into an official interference that would excite the observations of the enemies of both countries, and probably interrupt the harmony that subsisted between the two Republics.

But as I cannot convey the ideas I wish you to use by any means so concisely or so well as to suppose myself the writer of the letter I shall adopt this method and you will make use of such parts or such ideas of it as you please if you approve the plan. Here follows the supposed letter:

CITIZENS: When I first arrived among you as Minister from the United States of America I was given to understand that the liberation of Thomas Paine would take place without any official interference on my part. This was the more agreeable to me as it would not only supersede the necessity of that interference, but would leave to yourselves the whole opportunity of doing justice to a man who, as far as I have been able to learn, has suffered much cruel treatment under what you have denominated the system of terror. But as I find my expectations have not been fulfilled I am under the official necessity of being more explicit upon the subject than I have hitherto been.

Permit me, in the first place, to observe that as it is impossible for me to suppose that it could have been the intention of France to seduce any citizens of America from their allegiance to their proper country by offering them the title of French citizen, so must I be compelled to believe that the title of French citizen conferred on Thomas Paine was intended only as a mask of honorary respect toward a man who had so eminently distinguished himself in defense of liberty, and on no occasion more so than in promoting and defending your own Revolution. For a proof of this I refer you to his two works entitled "Rights

of Man." Those works have procured to him an addition of esteem in America, and I am sorry they have been so ill rewarded in France. But be this title of French citizen more or less, it is now entirely swept away by the vote of the Convention which declares him to be a foreigner, and which supersedes the vote of the Assembly that conferred that title upon him, consequently upon the case superseded with it.

In consequence of this vote of the Convention declaring him to be a foreigner the former committees have imprisoned him. It is therefore become my official duty to declare to you that the foreigner thus imprisoned is a citizen of the United States of America as fully, as legally, as constitutionally as myself, and that he is moreover one of the principal founders of the American Republic.

I have been informed of a law or decree of the Convention which subjects foreigners born in any of the countries at war with France to arrestation and imprisonment. This law when applied to citizens of America born in England is an infraction of the Treaty of Alliance and of Amity and Commerce, which knows no distinction of American citizens on account of the place of their birth, but recognizes all to be citizens whom the Constitution and laws of America recognize as such. The circumstances under which

America has been peopled requires this guard on her treaties, because the mass of her citizens are composed not of natives only but also of the natives of almost all the countries of Europe who have sought an asylum there from the persecutions they experienced in their own countries.

After this intimation you will without doubt see the propriety of modeling that law to the principles of the treaty, because the law of treaty in cases where it applies is the governing law to both parties alike, and it cannot be infracted without hazarding the existence of the treaty.

Of the patriotism of Thomas Paine I can speak fully, if we agree to give to patriotism a fixed idea consistent with that of a republic. It would then signify a strict adherence to moral justice, to the equality of civil and political rights, to the system of representative government, and an opposition to all hereditary claims to govern. Admitting patriotism to consist in these principles, I know of no man who has gone beyond Thomas Paine in promulgating and defending them, and that for almost twenty years past.

I have now spoken to you on the principal matters concerned in the case of Thomas Paine. The title of French citizen which you had enforced upon him,

you have since taken away by declaring him to be a foreigner, and consequently this part of the subject ceases of itself. I have declared to you that this foreigner is a citizen of the United States of America, and have assured you of his patriotism.

I cannot help at the same time repeating to you my wish that his liberation had taken place without my being obliged to go thus far into the subject, because it is the mutual interest of both Republics to avoid as much as possible all subjects of controversy, especially those from which no possible good can flow.

I still hope that you will save me the unpleasant task of proceeding any further by sending me an order for his liberation, which the injured state of his health absolutely requires. I shall be happy to receive such an order from you and happy in presenting it to him, for to the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not and cannot be indifferent.

This is the sort of letter I wish you to write, for I have no idea that you will succeed by any measures that can, by any kind of construction, be interpreted into a want of confidence or an apprehension of consequences. It is themselves that ought to be apprehensive of consequences if any are to be apprehended. They, I mean the committees, are not certain that the Convention or the nation would support them in forc-

ing any question of extremity that might interrupt the good understanding subsisting between the two countries; and I know of no question [so likely] to do this as that which involves the rights and liberty of a citizen.

You will please to observe that I have put the case of French citizenship in a point of view that ought not only to preclude, but to make them ashamed to advance anything upon this subject; and this is better than to have to answer their counter-reclamation afterwards. Either the citizenship was intended as a token of honorary respect, or it was intended to deprive America of a citizen or to seduce him from his allegiance to his proper country. If it was intended as an honor they must act consistently with the principle of honor. But if they make a pretense for detaining me, they convict themselves of the act of seduction.

Had America singled out any particular French citizen, complimented him with the title of Citizen of America, which he without suspecting any fraudulent intention might accept, and then after having invited or rather inveigled him into America made his acceptance of that title a pretense for seducing or forcing him from his allegiance to France, would not France have just cause to be offended at America? And ought not America to have the same right to be

offended at France? And will the committees take upon themselves to answer for the dishonor they bring upon the national character of their country?

If these arguments are stated beforehand they will prevent the committees going into the subject of French citizenship. They must be ashamed of it.

But after all the case comes to this, that this French citizenship appertains no longer to me because the Convention, as I have already said, have swept it away by declaring me to be a foreigner, and it is not in the power of the committees to reverse it. But if I am to be citizen and foreigner, and citizen again, just when and how and for any purpose they please, they take the Government of America into their own hands and make her only a cipher in their system.

Though these ideas have been long with me they have been more particularly matured by reading your last communication, and I have many reasons to wish you had opened that communication sooner. I am best acquainted with the persons you have to deal with and the circumstances of my own case. If you choose to adopt the letter as it is, I send you a translation for the sake of expediting the business. I have endeavored to conceive your own manner of expression as well as I could, and the civility of language you would use, but the matter of the letter is essential to me.

If you choose to confer with some of the members of the Committee at your own house on the subject of the letter it may render the sending it unnecessary; but in either case I must request and press you not to give away to evasion and delay, and that you will fix positively with them that they shall give you an answer in three or four days whether they will liberate me on the representation you have made in the letter, or whether you must be forced to go further into the subject. The state of my health will not admit of delay, and besides, the tortured state of my mind wears me down.

If they talk of bringing me to trial (and I well know there is no accusation against me and that they can bring none) I certainly shall summon you as an evidence to my character. This you may mention to them either as what I intend to do or what you intend to do voluntarily for me.

I am anxious that you undertake this business without losing time, because if I am not liberated in the course of this decade, I intend, if in case the seventy-one detained deputies are liberated, to follow the same track that they have done, and publish my own case myself. I cannot rest any longer in this state of miserable suspense, be the consequences what they may.

THOMAS PAINE.

5.*

DEAR SIR: I need not mention to you the happiness I received from the information you sent me by Mr. Beresford. I easily guess the persons you have conversed with on the subject of my liberation—but matters and even promises that pass in conversation are not quite so strictly attended to here as in the country you come from.

I am not, my dear Sir, impatient from anything in my disposition, but the state of my health requires liberty and a better air; and besides this, the rules of the prison do not permit me, though I have all the indulgences the concierge can give, to procure the things necessary to my recovery, which is slow as to strength. I have a tolerable appetite but the allowance of provision is scanty. We are not allowed a knife to cut our victuals with, nor a razor to shave; but they have lately allowed some barbers that are here to shave.

The room where I am lodged is a ground floor level with the earth in the garden and floored with brick, and is so wet after every rain that I cannot

* This letter, written in a feeble hand, bears no date; but Monroe's endorsement, "2nd. Luxembourg," indicates November 2, two days before Paine was liberated.—*Editor.*

guard against taking colds that continually cheat my recovery. If you could, without interfering with or deranging the mode proposed for my liberation, inform the Committee that the state of my health requires liberty and air, it would be good ground to hasten my liberation.

The length of my imprisonment is also a reason, for I am now almost the oldest inhabitant of this uncomfortable mansion, and I see twenty, thirty and sometimes forty persons a day put in liberty who have not been so long confined as myself. Their liberation is a happiness to me; but I feel sometimes, a little mortification that I am thus left behind.

I leave it entirely to you to arrange this matter. The messenger waits.

Yours affectionately,

T. P.

I hope and wish much to see you. I have much to say. I have had the attendance of Dr. Graham (physician to General O'Hara, who is prisoner here) and of Dr. Makouski, house physician, who has been most exceedingly kind to me. After I am at liberty I shall be glad to introduce him to you.

LETTER TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

DATED PARIS, JULY 30, 1796.

ON his release from the Luxembourg prison, Paine, being an invalid and impoverished, took up a residence with the United States Minister, James Monroe, at whose house he remained for about eighteen months. Meanwhile he had been unanimously restored to his seat in the French Convention, and sat there until its adjournment, October 26, 1795. In the same year he wrote the first of several censorious letters to President Washington, whom he charged with inefficiency and treachery.

Paine's bitterness of feeling toward Washington was due to the fact that during the eighteen months or more since he was thrown into prison, no word of kindness or inquiry had come from Washington, his former comrade in arms.

Of the following letters, the one dated February 22, 1795, full of sorrowful and bitter reproach, was not sent at the time. Monroe dissuaded Paine from doing so. Eighteen months later he wrote this introductory letter, incorporating the others, and despatched the whole to America.

HIS censure is but awkwardly softened by apology, I shall offer to you no apology for this letter. The eventful crisis to which your double politics have conducted the affairs of your country, requires an investigation uncramped by ceremony.

There was a time when the fame of America, moral and political, stood fair and high in the world. The lustre of her Revolution extended itself to every individual; and to be a citizen of America gave a title to respect in Europe. Neither meanness nor ingratitude had been mingled in the composition of her character. Her resistance to the attempted

tyranny of England left her unsuspected of the one, and her open acknowledgment of the aid she received from France precluded all suspicion of the other. The Washington of politics had not then appeared.

At the time I left America (April, 1787) the Continental Convention, that formed the Federal Constitution was on the point of meeting. Since that time new schemes of politics, and new distinctions of parties, have arisen. The term *Anti-federalist* has been applied to all those who combated the defects of that Constitution, or opposed the measures of your administration.

It was only to the absolute necessity of establishing some Federal authority, extending equally over all the States, that an instrument so inconsistent as the present Federal Constitution is, obtained a suffrage. I would have voted for it myself, had I been in America, or even for a worse, rather than have had none, provided it contained the means of remedying its defects by the same appeal to the people by which it was to be established. It is always better policy to leave removable errors to expose themselves than to hazard too much in contending against them theoretically.

I have introduced these observations, not only to mark the general difference between Anti-federalist

and Anti-constitutionalist, but to preclude the effect, and even the application, of the former of these terms to myself.

I declare myself opposed to several matters in the Constitution, particularly to the manner in which what is called the Executive is formed, and to the long duration of the Senate; and if I live to return to America, I will use all my endeavors to have them altered.* I also declare myself opposed to almost the whole of your administration; for I know it to have been deceitful, if not perfidious, as I shall show in the course of this letter.

But as to the point of consolidating the States into a Federal Government, it so happens, that the proposition for that purpose came originally from myself. I proposed it in a letter to Chancellor Livingston in the spring of 1782, while that gentleman was Minister for Foreign Affairs. The five per cent. duty recommended by Congress had then fallen through, having been adopted by some of the States, altered

* I have always been opposed to the mode of refining government up to an individual, or what is called a single executive. Such a man will always be the chief of a party. A plurality is far better: It combines the mass of a nation better together: And besides this, it is necessary to the manly mind of a republic that it loses the debasing idea of obeying an individual.—*Author.*

by others, rejected by Rhode Island, and repealed by Virginia after it had been consented to.

The proposal in the letter I allude to, was to get over the whole difficulty at once, by annexing a Continental legislative body to Congress; for in order to have any law of the Union uniform, the case could only be that either Congress, as it then stood, must frame the law, and the States severally adopt it without alteration, or the States must erect a Continental legislature for the purpose.

Chancellor Livingston, Robert Morris, Gouverneur Morris and myself had a meeting at the house of Robert Morris on the subject of that letter. There was no diversity of opinion on the proposition for a Continental legislature: the only difficulty was on the manner of bringing the proposition forward. For my own part, as I considered it as a remedy in reserve, that could be applied at any time *when the states saw themselves wrong enough to be put right* (which did not appear to be the case at that time), I did not see the propriety of urging it precipitately, and declined being the publisher of it myself.

After this account of a fact, the leaders of your party will scarcely have the hardiness to apply to me the term of Anti-federalist. But I can go to a date and to a fact beyond this; for the proposition for

electing a Continental convention to form the Continental Government is one of the subjects treated of in the pamphlet "Common Sense."

Having thus cleared away a little of the rubbish that might otherwise have lain in my way, I return to the point of time at which the present Federal Constitution and your administration began.

It was very well said by an anonymous writer in Philadelphia, about a year before that period, that "*thirteen staves and ne'er a hoop will not make a barrel,*" and as any kind of hooping the barrel, however defectively executed, would be better than none, it was scarcely possible but that considerable advantages must arise from the Federal hooping of the States. It was with pleasure that every sincere friend of America beheld, as the natural effect of union, her rising prosperity; and it was with grief they saw that prosperity mixed, even in the blossom, with the germ of corruption.

Monopolies of every kind marked your administration almost in the moment of its commencement. The lands obtained by the Revolution were lavished upon partisans; the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the speculator; injustice was acted under the pretense of faith; and the chief of the army became the patron of the fraud. From such a begin-

ning what else could be expected than what has happened? A mean and servile submission to the insults of one nation; treachery and ingratitude to another.

Some vices make their approach with such a splendid appearance that we scarcely know to what class of moral distinctions they belong. They are rather virtues corrupted than vices, originally. But meanness and ingratitude have nothing equivocal in their character. There is not a trait in them that renders them doubtful. They are so originally vice that they are generated in the dung of other vices, and crawl into existence with the filth upon their back. The fugitives have found protection in you, and the levee-room is their place of rendezvous.

As the Federal Constitution is a copy, though not quite so base as the original, of the form of the British Government, an imitation of its vices was naturally to be expected. So intimate is the connection between *form* and *practise*, that to adopt the one is to invite the other. Imitation is naturally progressive and is rapidly so in matters that are vicious.

Soon after the Federal Constitution arrived in England, I received a letter from a female literary correspondent (a native of New York), very well mixed with friendship, sentiment and politics. In my answer to that letter, I permitted myself to ramble into

the wilderness of imagination, and to anticipate what might hereafter be the condition of America. I had no idea that the picture I then drew was realizing so fast, and still less that Mr. Washington was hurrying it on. As the extract I allude to is congenial with the subject I am upon, I here transcribe it:

[*The extract is the same as that given in a footnote in the Memorial to Monroe.*]

Impressed, as I was, with apprehensions of this kind, I had America constantly in my mind in all the publications I afterwards made. The first and still more the second part of the "Rights of Man" bear evident marks of this watchfulness; and the "Dissertation on First Principles of Government" [XXIV] goes more directly to the point than either of the former. I now pass on to other subjects.

It will be supposed by those into whose hands this letter may fall that I have some personal resentment against you; I will therefore settle this point before I proceed further.

If I have any resentment you must acknowledge that I have not been hasty in declaring it; neither would it now be declared (for what are private resentments to the public) if the cause of it did not unite itself as well with your public as with your

private character, and with the motives of your political conduct.

The part I acted in the American Revolution is well known; I shall not here repeat it.* I know also that had it not been for the aid received from France, in men, money and ships, that your cold and unmilitary conduct (as I shall show in the course of this letter) would in all probability have lost America; at least she would not have been the independent nation she now is. You slept away your time in the field, till the finances of the country were completely exhausted, and you have but little share in the glory of

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* In his "Reminiscences of Mirabeau," Etienne Dumont, the Swiss scholar and eminent disciple of Jeremy Bentham, says of Paine during his heyday in France: "His egregious conceit and self-sufficiency disgusted me. He was drunk with vanity. If you believed him, it was he who had done everything in America. He was an absolute caricature of the vainest of Frenchmen. He fancied that his book on "Rights of Man" ought to replace every other book in the world, and he told us roundly that, if it were in his power to exterminate every library in existence, he would do so without hesitation, in order to eradicate the errors they contained, and begin, with "Rights of Man," a new chain of ideas and principles. He knew all his own writings by heart, but he knew nothing else. He repeated to us even love letters of his own composition, written in the most fantastic style. They were indeed the effusions of his youth and were worthy of Mascarillo. Yet Paine was a man of talent, full of imagination, gifted with popular eloquence and wielded not without skill the weapon of irony."

the final event. It is time, Sir, to speak the undisguised language of historical truth.

Elevated to the chair of the Presidency, you assumed the merit of everything to yourself, and the natural ingratitude of your constitution began to appear. You commenced your Presidential career by encouraging and swallowing the grossest adulation, and you traveled America from one end to the other to put yourself in the way of receiving it. You have as many addresses in your chest as James II. As to what were your views, for, if you are not great enough to have ambition, you are little enough to have vanity, they cannot be directly inferred from expressions of your own; but the partisans of your politics have divulged the secret.

John Adams has said (and John it is known was always a speller after places and offices, and never thought his little services were highly enough paid) John has said, that as Mr. Washington had no child, the Presidency should be made hereditary in the family of Lund Washington. John might then have counted upon some sinecure himself, and a provision for his descendants. He did not go so far as to say, also, that the Vice-Presidency should be hereditary in the family of John Adams. He prudently left that

to stand on the ground that one good turn deserves another.*

John Adams is one of those men who never contemplated the origin of government, or comprehended anything of first principles. If he had, he might have seen that the right to set up and establish hereditary government never did, and never can, exist in any generation at any time whatever; that it is of the nature of treason; because it is an attempt to take away the rights of all the minors living at that time, and of all succeeding generations. It is of a degree beyond common treason. It is a sin against nature. The equal right of every generation is a right fixed in the nature of things. It belongs to the son when of age, as it belonged to the father before him.

John Adams would himself deny the right that any former deceased generation could have to decree authoritatively a succession of governors over him, or over his children; and yet he assumes the pretended right, treasonable as it is, of acting it himself. His ignorance is his best excuse.

John Jay has said (and this John was always the sycophant of everything in power, from Mr. Gerard

* Two persons to whom John Adams said this, told me of it. The secretary of Mr. Jay was present when it was told to me.—*Author.*

in America, to Grenville in England) John Jay has said that the Senate should have been appointed for life. He would then have been sure of never wanting a lucrative appointment for himself, and have had no fears about impeachment. These are the disguised traitors that call themselves Federalists.*

Could I have known to what degree of corruption and perfidy the administrative part of the Government of America had descended, I could have been at no loss to have understood the reservedness of Mr. Washington toward me, during my imprisonment in the Luxembourg. There are cases in which silence is a loud language. I will here explain the cause of that imprisonment, and return to Mr. Washington afterwards.

In the course of that rage, terror and suspicion which the brutal letter of the Duke of Brunswick first started into existence in France, it happened that almost every man who was opposed to violence, or who was not violent himself, became suspected. I had constantly been opposed to everything which was of the nature or of the appearance of violence; but as I had always done it in a manner that showed it

* If Mr. John Jay desires to know on what authority I say this, I will give that authority publicly when he chooses to call for it.—*Author.*

to be a principle founded in my heart, and not a political maneuver, it precluded the pretense of accusing me. I was reached, however, under another pretense.

A decree was passed to imprison all persons born in England; but as I was a member of the Convention, and had been complimented with the honorary style of Citizen of France, as Mr. Washington and some other Americans had been, this decree fell short of reaching me. A motion was afterwards made and carried, supported chiefly by Bourdon de l'Oise, for expelling foreigners from the Convention. My expulsion being thus effected, the two committees of Public Safety and of General Surety, of which Robespierre was the dictator, put me in arrestation under the former decree for imprisoning persons born in England. Having thus shown under what pretense the imprisonment was effected, I come to speak of such parts of the case as apply between me and Mr. Washington, either as a President or as an individual.

I have always considered that a foreigner, such as I was in fact, with respect to France, might be a member of a convention for framing a constitution, without affecting his right of citizenship in the country to which he belongs, but not a member of a government after a constitution is formed; and I have uni-

formly acted upon this distinction. To be a member of a government requires that a person be in allegiance to that government and to the country locally. But a constitution, being a thing of principle, and not of action, and which, after it is formed, is to be referred to the people for their approbation or rejection, does not require allegiance in the persons forming and proposing it; and besides this, it is only to the thing after it be formed and established, and to the country after its governmental character is fixed by the adoption of a constitution, that the allegiance can be given.

No oath of allegiance or of citizenship was required of the members who composed the Convention: there was nothing existing in form to swear allegiance to. If any such condition had been required, I could not, as citizen of America in fact, though citizen of France by compliment, have accepted a seat in the Convention.

As my citizenship in America was not altered or diminished by anything I had done in Europe (on the contrary, it ought to be considered as strengthened,. for it was the American principle of government that I was endeavoring to spread in Europe), and as it is the duty of every government to charge itself with the care of any of its citizens who may

happen to fall under an arbitrary persecution abroad, and is also one of the reasons for which ambassadors or ministers are appointed—it was the duty of the Executive Department in America, to have made (at least) some inquiries about me, as soon as it heard of my imprisonment.

But if this had not been the case, that government owed it to me on every ground and principle of honor and gratitude. Mr. Washington owed it to me on every score of private acquaintance, I will not now say, friendship; for it has some time been known by those who know him, that he has no friendships; that he is incapable of forming any; he can serve or desert a man, or a cause, with constitutional indifference; and it is this cold, hermaphrodite faculty that imposed itself upon the world and was credited for a while, by enemies as by friends, for prudence, moderation and impartiality.

Soon after I was put into arrestation and imprisonment in the Luxembourg, the Americans who were then in Paris went in a body to the bar of the Convention to reclaim me. They were answered by the then President Vadier, who has since absconded, that *I was born in England,* and it was signified to them by some of the Committee of General Surety to whom they were referred (I have been told it was Billaud

Varennes) that their reclamation of me was only the act of individuals, without any authority from the American Government.

A few days after this, all communication from persons imprisoned to any person without the prison was cut off by an order of the police. I neither saw, nor heard from, anybody for six months; and the only hope that remained to me was that a new Minister would arrive from America to supersede Morris, and that he would be authorized to inquire into the cause of my imprisonment. But even this hope, in the state to which matters were daily arriving, was too remote to have any consolatory effect, and I contented myself with the thought that I might be remembered when it would be too late.

There is perhaps no condition from which a man conscious of his own uprightness cannot derive consolation; for it is in itself a consolation for him to find that he can bear that condition with calmness and fortitude.

From about the middle of March (1794) to the fall of Robespierre July twenty-ninth (9th of Thermidor), the state of things in the prisons was a continued scene of horror. No man could count upon life for twenty-four hours. To such a pitch of rage and suspicion were Robespierre and his committee

arrived, that it seemed as if they feared to leave a man living. Scarcely a night passed in which ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more were not taken out of the prison, carried before a pretended tribunal in the morning and guillotined before night.

One hundred and sixty-nine were taken out of the Luxembourg one night, in the month of July, and one hundred and sixty of them guillotined. A list of two hundred more, according to the report in the prison, was preparing a few days before Robespierre fell. In this last list I have good reason to believe I was included. A memorandum in the hand-writing of Robespierre was afterwards produced in the Convention, by the committee to whom the papers of Robespierre were referred, in these words:

Demander que Thomas Payne soit décrété d'accusation pour les intérêts de l'Amérique, autant que de la France.	Demand that Thomas Paine be decreed of accusation for the interests of America as well as of France.

I had then been imprisoned seven months, and the silence of the Executive part of the Government of America (Mr. Washington) upon the case, and upon everything respecting me, was explanation enough to Robespierre that he might proceed to extremities.

A violent fever which had nearly terminated my existence, was, I believe, the circumstance that preserved it. I was not in a condition to be removed, or to know of what was passing, or of what had passed, for more than a month. It makes a blank in my remembrance of life. The first thing I was informed of was the fall of Robespierre.

About a week after this, Mr. Monroe arrived to supersede Gouverneur Morris, and as soon as I was able to write a note legible enough to be read, I found a way to convey one to him by means of the man who lighted the lamps in the prison; and whose unabated friendship to me, from whom he had never received any service, and with difficulty accepted any recompense, puts the character of Mr. Washington to shame.

In a few days I received a message from Mr. Monroe, conveyed to me in a note from an intermediate person, with assurance of his friendship, and expressing a desire that I would rest the case in his hands. After a fortnight or more had passed, and hearing nothing further, I wrote to a friend who was then in Paris, a citizen of Philadelphia, requesting him to inform me what was the true situation of things with respect to me. I was sure that something was the

matter; I began to have hard thoughts of Mr. Washington, but I was unwilling to encourage them.

In about ten days I received an answer to my letter, in which the writer says, "Mr. Monroe has told me that he has no order [meaning from the President, Mr. Washington] respecting you, but that he (Mr. Monroe) will do everything in his power to liberate you; but, from what I learn from the Americans lately arrived in Paris, you are not considered, either by the American Government, or by the individuals, as an American citizen."

I was now at no loss to understand Mr. Washington and his new fangled faction, and that their policy was silently to leave me to fall in France. They were rushing as fast as they could venture, without awakening the jealousy of America, into all the vices and corruptions of the British Government; and it was no more consistent with the policy of Mr. Washington, and those who immediately surrounded him, than it was with that of Robespierre or of Pitt, that I should survive. They have, however, missed the mark, and the reaction is upon themselves.

Upon the receipt of the letter just alluded to, I sent a memorial to Mr. Monroe, which the reader will find in the appendix, and I received from him the following answer. It is dated the eighteenth of Sep-

tember, but did not come to hand till about the fourth of October. I was then falling into a relapse, the weather was becoming damp and cold, fuel was not to be had, and the abscess in my side (the consequence of these things, and of the want of air and exercise), was beginning to form, and which has continued immovable ever since. Here follows Mr. Monroe's letter:

PARIS, September 18, 1794.

DEAR SIR:

I was favored soon after my arrival here with several letters from you, and more latterly with one in the character of a Memorial upon the subject of your confinement; and should have answered them at the times they were respectively written had I not concluded you would have calculated with certainty upon the deep interest I take in your welfare, and the pleasure with which I shall embrace every opportunity in my power to serve you. I should still pursue the same course, and for reasons which must obviously occur, if I did not find that you are disquieted with apprehensions upon interesting points, and which justice to you and our country equally forbid you should entertain.

You mention that you have been informed you are not considered as an American citizen by the Americans, and that you have likewise heard that I had no instructions respecting you by the Government. I doubt not the person who gave you the information meant well, but I suspect he did not even convey accurately his own ideas on the first point: for I presume the most he could say is that you had

likewise become a French citizen, and which by no means deprived you of being an American one.

Even this, however, may be doubted, I mean the acquisition of citizenship in France, and I confess you have said much to show that it has not been made. I really suspect that this was all that the gentleman who wrote to you, and those Americans he heard speak upon the subject meant. It becomes my duty, however, to declare to you, that I consider you as an American citizen, and that you are considered universally in that character by the people of America. As such you are entitled to my attention; and so far as it can be given consistently with those obligations which are mutual between every government and even a transient passenger, you shall receive it.

The Congress have never decided upon the subject of citizenship in a manner to regard the present case. By being with us through the Revolution you are of our country as absolutely as if you had been born there, and you are no more of England than every native American is. This is the true doctrine in the present case, so far as it becomes complicated with any other consideration. I have mentioned it to make you easy upon the only point which could give you any disquietude.

Is it necessary for me to tell you how much all your countrymen, I speak of the great mass of people, are interested in your welfare? They have not forgotten the history of their own Revolution and the difficult scenes through which they passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I trust never will stain, our national char-

acter. You are considered by them as not only having rendered important service in our own Revolution, but as being, on a more extensive scale, the friend of human rights, and a distinguished and able advocate in favor of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine, the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent.

Of the sense which the President has always entertained of your merits, and of his friendly disposition toward you, you are too well assured to require any declaration of it from me. That I forward his wishes in seeking your safety is what I well know, and this will form an additional obligation on me to perform what I should otherwise consider as a duty.

You are, in my opinion, at present menaced by no kind of danger. To liberate you, will be an object of my endeavors, and as soon as possible. But you must, until that event shall be accomplished, bear your situation with patience and fortitude. You will likewise have the justice to recollect, that I am placed here upon a difficult theater,* many important objects to attend to, with few to consult. It becomes me in pursuit of those to regulate my conduct in respect to each, as to the manner and the time, as will, in my judgment, be best calculated to accomplish the whole.

With great esteem and respect consider me personally your friend,

JAMES MONROE.

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* This I presume alludes to the embarrassments which the strange conduct of Gouverneur Morris had occasioned, and which, I well know, had created suspicions of the sincerity of Mr. Washington.—*Author.*

The part in Mr. Monroe's letter, in which he speaks of the President (Mr. Washington), is put in soft language. Mr. Monroe knew what Mr. Washington had said formerly, and he was willing to keep that in view. But the fact is, not only that Mr. Washington had given no orders to Mr. Monroe, as the letter [of Whiteside] stated, but he did not so much as say to him, inquire if Mr. Paine be dead or alive, in prison or out, or see if there be any assistance we can give him.

While these matters were passing, the liberations from the prisons were numerous; from twenty to forty in the course of almost every twenty-four hours. The continuance of my imprisonment after a new Minister had arrived immediately from America, which was now more than two months, was a matter so obviously strange, that I found the character of the American Government spoken of in very unqualified terms of reproach; not only by those who still remained in prison, but by those who were liberated, and by persons who had access to the prison from without. Under these circumstances I wrote again to Mr. Monroe, and found occasion, among other things, to say: "It will not add to the popularity of Mr. Washington to have it believed in America, as it is believed here, that he connives at my imprisonment."

The case, so far as it respected Mr. Monroe, was, that having to get over the difficulties, which the strange conduct of Gouverneur Morris had thrown in the way of a successor, and having no authority from the American Government to speak officially upon anything relating to me, he found himself obliged to proceed by unofficial means with individual members; for though Robespierre was overthrown, the Robespierrian members of the Committee of Public Safety still remained in considerable force, and had they found out that Mr. Monroe had no official authority upon the case, they would have paid little or no regard to his reclamation of me. In the meantime my health was suffering exceedingly, the dreary prospect of winter was coming on, and imprisonment was still a thing of danger.

After the Robespierrian members of the Committee were removed by the expiration of their time of serving, Mr. Monroe reclaimed me, and I was liberated the fourth of November. Mr. Monroe arrived in Paris the beginning of August before. All that period of my imprisonment, at least, I owe not to Robespierre, but to his colleague in projects, George Washington.

Immediately upon my liberation, Mr. Monroe invited me to his house, where I remained more than

a year and a half; and I speak of his aid and friendship, as an open-hearted man will always do in such a case, with respect and gratitude.

Soon after my liberation, the Convention passed an unanimous vote to invite me to return to my seat among them. The times were still unsettled and dangerous, as well from without as within, for the coalition was unbroken, and the Constitution not settled. I chose, however, to accept the invitation; for as I undertake nothing but what I believe to be right, I abandon nothing that I undertake; and I was willing also to show that, as I was not of a cast of mind to be deterred by prospects or retrospects of danger, so neither were my principles to be weakened by misfortune or perverted by disgust.

Being now once more abroad in the world, I began to find that I was not the only one who had conceived an unfavorable opinion of Mr. Washington; it was evident that his character was on the decline as well among Americans as among foreigners of different nations. From being the chief of the government, he had made himself the chief of a party; and his integrity was questioned, for his politics had a doubtful appearance. The mission of Mr. Jay to London, notwithstanding there was an American Minister there already, had then taken place, and was beginning to

be talked of. It appeared to others, as it did to me, to be enveloped in mystery, which every day served either to increase or to explain into matter of suspicion.

In the year 1790, or about that time, Mr. Washington, as President, had sent Gouverneur Morris to London, as his secret agent to have some communication with the British Ministry. To cover the agency of Morris it was given out, I know not by whom, that he went as an agent from Robert Morris to borrow money in Europe, and the report was permitted to pass uncontradicted. The event of Morris's negotiation was, that Mr. Hammond was sent Minister from England to America, Pinckney from America to England, and himself Minister to France.

If, while Morris was Minister in France, he was not an emissary of the British Ministry and the coalesced powers, he gave strong reasons to suspect him of it. No one who saw his conduct, and heard his conversation, could doubt his being in their interest; and had he not got off the time he did, after his recall, he would have been in arrestation. Some letters of his had fallen into the hands of the Committee of Public Safety, and inquiry was making after him.

A great bustle had been made by Mr. Washington about the conduct of Genet in America, while that of his own Minister, Morris, in France, was infinitely more reproachable. If Genet was imprudent or rash, he was not treacherous; but Morris was all three. He was the enemy of the French Revolution, in every stage of it. But notwithstanding this conduct on the part of Morris, and the known profligacy of his character, Mr. Washington in a letter he wrote to him at the time of recalling him on the complaint and request of the Committee of Public Safety, assures him, that though he had complied with that request, he still retained the same esteem and friendship for him as before.

This letter Morris was foolish enough to tell of; and, as his own character and conduct were notorious, the telling of it could have but one effect, which was that of implicating the character of the writer.* Morris still loiters in Europe, chiefly in England; and Mr. Washington is still in correspondence with him. Mr. Washington ought, therefore, to expect, espe-

* Washington wrote to Morris, June 19, 1794: "My confidence in and friendship for you remain undiminished." It was not "foolish" but sagacious on the part of Morris to advertise this one sentence. Otherwise his power to keep Paine imprisoned would have been impaired, and he himself might not have escaped from France.

cially since his conduct in the affairs of Jay's Treaty, that France must consider Morris and Washington as men of the same description. The chief difference, however, between the two is (for in politics there is none), that the one is profligate enough to profess an indifference about *moral* principles, and the other is prudent enough to conceal the want of them.

About three months after I was at liberty, the official note of Jay to Grenville on the subject of the capture of American vessels by the British cruisers appeared in the American papers that arrived at Paris. Everything was of a-piece. Everything was mean. The same kind of character went to all circumstances public or private. Disgusted at this national degradation, as well as at the particular conduct of Mr. Washington to me, I wrote to him (Mr. Washington) on the twenty-second of February (1795) under cover to the then Secretary of State (Mr. Randolph), and intrusted the letter to Mr. Letombe, who was appointed French Consul to Philadelphia, and was on the point of taking his departure. When I supposed Mr. Letombe had sailed, I mentioned the letter to Mr. Monroe, and as I was then in his house, I showed it to him. He expressed a wish that I would recall it, which he supposed might be done, as he had learned that Mr. Letombe had not then sailed.

I agreed to do so, and it was returned by Mr. Letombe under cover to Mr. Monroe.

The letter, however, will now reach Mr. Washington publicly in the course of this work.

About the month of September following, I had a severe relapse which gave occasion to the report of my death. I had felt it coming on a considerable time before, which occasioned me to hasten the work I had then in hand, the second part of the "Age of Reason." When I had finished that work, I bestowed another letter on Mr. Washington, which I sent under cover to Mr. Benjamin Franklin Bache of Philadelphia. The letter is as follows:

PARIS, September 20, 1795.

SIR:

I had written you a letter by Mr. Letombe, French Consul, but, at the request of Mr. Monroe, I withdrew it, and the letter is still by me. I was the more easily prevailed upon to do this, as it was then my intention to have returned to America the latter end of the present year, 1795; but the illness I now suffer prevents me. In case I had come, I should have applied to you for such parts of your official letters (and of your private ones, if you had chosen to give them) as contained any instructions or directions either to Mr. Monroe, or to Mr. Morris, or to any other person respecting me; for after you were informed of my imprisonment in France, it was incumbent on you to have made some inquiry into the

cause, as you might very well conclude that I had not the opportunity of informing you of it.

I cannot understand your silence upon this subject upon any other ground, than as *connivance* at my imprisonment; and this is the manner it is understood here, and will be understood in America, unless you give me authority for contradicting it. I therefore write you this letter, to propose to you to send me copies of any letters you have written that may remove that suspicion. In the preface to the second part of the "Age of Reason," I have given a memorandum from the handwriting of Robespierre, in which he proposed a decree of accusation against me, "*for the interests of America as well as of France.*" He could have no cause for putting America in the case, but by interpreting the silence of the American Government into connivance and consent.

I was imprisoned on the ground of being born in England; and your silence in not inquiring into the cause of that imprisonment, and reclaiming me against it, was tacitly giving me up. I ought not to have suspected you of treachery; but whether I recover from the illness I now suffer or not, I shall continue to think you treacherous, till you give me cause to think otherwise. I am sure you would have found yourself more at your ease had you acted by me as you ought; for whether your desertion of me was intended to gratify the English Government, or to let me fall into destruction in France that you might exclaim the louder against the French Revolution, or whether you hoped by my extinction to meet with less opposition in mounting up the American Government—either of these will involve you in reproach you will not easily shake off.

THOMAS PAINE.

Here follows the letter * above alluded to, which I had stopped in complaisance to Mr. Monroe:

PARIS, February 22, 1795.

SIR:

As it is always painful to reproach those one would wish to respect, it is not without some difficulty that I have taken the resolution to write to you. The dangers to which I have been exposed cannot have been unknown to you, and the guarded silence you have observed upon that circumstance is what I ought not to have expected from you, either as a friend or as President of the United States.

You knew enough of my character to be assured that I could not have deserved imprisonment in France; and, without knowing anything more than this, you had sufficient ground to have taken some interest for my safety. Every motive arising from recollection of times past ought to have suggested to you the propriety of such a measure. But I cannot find that you have so much as directed any inquiry to be made whether I was in prison or at liberty, dead or alive; what the cause of that imprisonment was, or whether there was any service or assistance you could render. Is this what I ought to have expected from America, after the part I had acted toward her, or will it redound to her honor or to yours, that I tell the story?

I do not hesitate to say that you have not served America with more disinterestedness, or greater zeal, or

* This letter was written on Washington's sixty-third birthday. —*Editor.*

more fidelity, than myself, and I know not if with better effect. After the Revolution of America was established I ventured into the new scenes of difficulties to extend the principles which that Revolution had produced, and you rested at home to partake of the advantages. In the progress of events, you beheld yourself a President in America, and me a prisoner in France. You folded your arms, forgot your friend and became silent.

As everything I have been doing in Europe was connected with my wishes for the prosperity of America, I ought to be the more surprised at this conduct on the part of her Government. It leaves me but one mode of explanation, which is *that everything is not as it ought to be amongst you,* and that the presence of a man who might disapprove, and who had credit enough with the country to be heard and believed, was not wished for. This was the operating motive with the despotic faction that imprisoned me in France (though the pretense was, that I was a foreigner), and those that have been silent and inactive toward me in America, appear to me to have acted from the same motive. It is impossible for me to discover any other.

After the part I have taken in the Revolution of America, it is natural that I feel interested in whatever relates to her character and prosperity. Though I am not on the spot to see what is immediately acting there, I see some part of what she is acting in Europe. For your own sake, as well as for that of America, I was both surprised and concerned at the appointment of Gouverneur Morris to be Minister to France. His conduct has proved that the opinion I had formed of that appointment

was well founded. I wrote that opinion to Mr. Jefferson at the time, and I was frank enough to say the same thing to Morris—*that it was an unfortunate appointment.* His prating, insignificant pomposity rendered him at once offensive, suspected and ridiculous; and his total neglect of all business had so disgusted the Americans that they proposed drawing up a protest against him.

He carried this neglect to such an extreme that it was necessary to inform him of it; and I asked him one day if he did not feel himself ashamed to take the money of the country, and do nothing for it? But Morris is so fond of profit and voluptuousness that he cares nothing about character. Had he not been removed at the time he was, I think his conduct would have precipitated the two countries into a rupture; and in this case, hated *systematically* as America is and ever will be by the British Government, and at the same time suspected by France, the commerce of America would have fallen a prey to both countries.

If the inconsistent conduct of Morris exposed the interest of America to some hazard in France, the pusillanimous conduct of Mr. Jay in England has rendered the American Government contemptible in Europe. Is it possible that any man who has contributed to the independence of America, and to free her from tyranny and injustice of the British Government, can read without shame and indignation the note of Jay to Grenville? It is a satire upon the Declaration of Independence, and an encouragement to the British Government to treat America with contempt. At the time this Minister of petitions was acting this miserable part he had every means in his hands to enable him to have done his business as he ought. The

success or failure of his mission depended upon the success or failure of the French arms.

Had France failed, Mr. Jay might have put his humble petition in his pocket and gone home. The case happened to be otherwise, and he has sacrificed the honor and perhaps all the advantages of it by turning petitioner. I take it for granted that he was sent over to demand indemnification for the captured property; and, in this case, if he thought he wanted a preamble to his demand, he might have said, "That, though the Government of England might suppose itself under the necessity of seizing American property bound to France, yet that supposed necessity could not preclude indemnification to the proprietors, who, acting under the authority of their own government, were not acccountable to any other." But Mr. Jay sets out with an implied recognition of the right of the British Government to seize and condemn: for he enters his complaint against the *irregularity* of the seizures and the condemnation, as if they were reprehensible only by not being *conformable* to the *terms* of the proclamation under which they were seized.

Instead of being the envoy of a government, he goes over like a lawyer to demand a new trial. I can hardly help thinking that Grenville wrote that note himself and Jay signed it; for the style of it is domestic and not diplomatic. The term, *His* Majesty, used without any descriptive epithet, always signifies the King, whom the Minister that speaks represents. If this sinking of the demand into a petition was a juggle between Grenville and Jay, to cover the indemnification, I think it will end in another juggle, that of never paying the money, and be made use of afterwards to preclude the right of demand-

ing it: for Mr. Jay has virtually disowned the right *by appealing to the magnanimity of His Majesty against the capturers.* He has made this magnanimous majesty the umpire in the case, and the Government of the United States must abide by the decision. If, Sir, I turn some part of this business into ridicule, it is to avoid the unpleasant sensation of serious indignation.

Among other things which I confess I do not understand, is the proclamation of neutrality. This has always appeared to me as an assumption on the part of the executive not warranted by the Constitution. But passing this over, as a disputable case, and considering it only as political, the consequence has been that of sustaining the losses of war without the balance of reprisals. When the profession of neutrality, on the part of America, was answered by hostilities on the part of Britain, the object and intention of that neutrality existed no longer; and to maintain it after this, was not only to encourage further insults and depredations, but was an informal breach of neutrality toward France, by passively contributing to the aid of her enemy. That the Government of England considered the American Government as pusillanimous, is evident from the increasing insolence of the conduct of the former toward the latter, till the affair of General Wayne. She then saw that it might be possible to kick a government into some degree of spirit.

So far as the proclamation of neutrality was intended to prevent a dissolute spirit of privateering in America under foreign colors, it was undoubtedly laudable; but to continue it as a government neutrality, after the commerce of America was made war upon, was submission and not

neutrality. I have heard so much about this thing called neutrality that I know not if the ungenerous and dishonorable silence (for I must call it such) that has been observed by your part of the Government toward me, during my imprisonment, has not in some measure arisen from that policy.

Though I have written you this letter, you ought not to suppose it has been an agreeable undertaking to me. On the contrary, I assure you, it has caused me some disquietude. I am sorry you have given me cause to do it; for, as I have always remembered your former friendship with pleasure, I suffer a loss by your depriving me of that sentiment.

THOMAS PAINE.

That this letter was not written in very good temper, is very evident; but it was just such a letter as his conduct appeared to me to merit, and everything on his part since has served to confirm that opinion. Had I wanted a commentary on his silence, with respect to my imprisonment in France, some of his faction have furnished me with it. What I here allude to is a publication in a Philadelphia paper, copied afterwards into a New York paper, both under the patronage of the Washington faction, in which the writer, still supposing me in prison in France, wonders at my lengthy respite from the scaffold; and he marks his politics still further, by saying:

It appears, moreover, that the people of England did not relish his (Thomas Paine's) opinions quite so well as he expected, and that for one of his last pieces, as destructive to the peace and happiness of their country (meaning, I suppose, the "Rights of Man"), they threatened our knight-errant with such serious vengeance, that, to avoid a trip to Botany Bay, he fled over to France, as a less dangerous voyage.

I am not refuting or contradicting the falsehood of this publication, for it is sufficiently notorious; neither am I censuring the writer: on the contrary, I thank him for the explanation he has incautiously given of the principles of the Washington faction. Insignificant, however, as the piece is, it was capable of having some ill effects had it arrived in France during my imprisonment, and in the time of Robespierre; and I am not uncharitable in supposing that this was one of the intentions of the writer.*

I have now done with Mr. Washington on the score of private affairs. It would have been far more agreeable to me had his conduct been such as not to have merited these reproaches. Errors or caprices of the

* I know not who the writer of the piece is, but some of the Americans say it is Phineas Bond, an American refugee, but now a British consul; and that he writes under the signature of Peter Skunk or Peter Porcupine, or some such signature.—*Author.*

Phineas Bond had nothing to do with it.—*Editor.*

temper can be pardoned and forgotten; but a cold deliberate crime of the heart, such as Mr. Washington is capable of acting, is not to be washed away. I now proceed to other matter.

After Jay's note to Grenville arrived in Paris from America, the character of everything that was to follow might be easily foreseen; and it was upon this anticipation that my letter of February the twenty-second was founded. The event has proved that I was not mistaken, except that it has been much worse than I expected.

It would naturally occur to Mr. Washington, that the secrecy of Jay's mission to England, where there was already an American Minister, could not but create some suspicion in the French Government; especially as the conduct of Morris had been notorious, and the intimacy of Mr. Washington with Morris was known.

The character which Mr. Washington has attempted to act in the world is a sort of nondescribable, chameleon-colored thing called *prudence*. It is, in many cases, a substitute for principle, and is so nearly allied to hypocrisy that it easily slides into it. His genius for prudence furnished him in this instance with an expedient that served, as is the natural and general character of all expedients, to diminish the

embarrassments of the moment and multiply them afterwards; for he authorized it to be made known to the French Government, as a confidential matter (Mr. Washington should recollect that I was a member of the Convention, and had the means of knowing what I here state), he authorized it, I say, to be announced, and that for the purpose of preventing any uneasiness to France on the score of Mr. Jay's mission to England, that the object of that mission, and of Mr. Jay's authority, was restricted to that of demanding the surrender of the western posts, and indemnification for the cargoes captured in American vessels.

Mr. Washington knows that this was untrue; and knowing this, he had good reason to himself for refusing to furnish the House of Representatives with copies of the instructions given to Jay, as he might suspect, among other things, that he should also be called upon for copies of instructions given to other Ministers, and that, in the contradiction of instructions, his want of integrity would be detected. Mr. Washington may now, perhaps, learn, when it is too late to be of any use to him, that a man will pass better through the world with a thousand open errors upon his back than in being detected in *one* sly false-

hood. When one is detected, a thousand are suspected.

The first account that arrived in Paris of a treaty being negotiated by Mr. Jay (for nobody suspected any), came in an English newspaper, which announced that a treaty *offensive* and *defensive* had been concluded between the United States of America and England. This was immediately denied by every American in Paris as an impossible thing; and though it was disbelieved by the French, it imprinted a suspicion that some underhand business was going forward.* At length the treaty itself arrived, and every well-affected American blushed with shame.

* It was the embarrassment into which the affairs and credit of America were thrown at this instant by the report above alluded to, that made it necessary to contradict it, and that by every means arising from opinion or founded upon authority. The Committee of Public Safety, existing at that time, had agreed to the full execution, on their part, of the treaty between America and France notwithstanding some equivocal conduct on the part of the American Government not very consistent with the good faith of an ally; but they were not in a disposition to be imposed upon by a counter-treaty. That Jay had no instructions beyond the points above stated, or none that could possibly be construed to extend to the length the British treaty goes, was a matter believed in America, in England and in France; and without going to any other source it followed naturally from the message of the President to Congress, when he nominated Jay upon that mission. The secretary of Mr. Jay came to Paris soon after the treaty with England had been concluded, and brought with him a copy of Mr. Jay's instructions, which he offered to show to me

It is curious to observe how the appearance of characters will change, while the root that produces them remains the same. The Washington faction having waded through the slough of negotiation, and while it amused France with professions of friendship contrived to injure her, immediately throws off the hypocrite, and assumes the swaggering air of a bravado. The party papers of that imbecile administration were on this occasion filled with paragraphs about *Sovereignty*. A poltroon may boast of his sovereign right to let another kick him, and this is the only kind of sovereignty shown in the treaty with England. But those daring paragraphs, as Timothy Pickering [Secretary of State] well knows, were intended for France; without whose assistance, in men, money, and ships, Mr. Washington would have cut but a poor figure in the American war. But of his military talents I shall speak hereafter.

I mean not to enter into any discussion of any article of Jay's Treaty; I shall speak only upon the

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as a *justification of Jay*. I advised him, as a friend, not to show them to anybody, and did not permit him to show them to me. "Who is it," said I to him, "that you intend to implicate as censurable by showing those instructions? Perhaps that implication may fall upon your own government." Though I did not see the instructions, I could not be at a loss to understand that the American Administration had been playing a double game.—*Author.*

whole of it. It is attempted to be justified on the ground of its not being a violation of any article or articles of the treaty preëxisting with France. But the sovereign right of explanation does not lie with George Washington and his man Timothy; France, on her part, has, at least, an equal right: and when nations dispute, it is not so much about words as about things.

A man, such as the world calls a sharper, and versed as Jay must be supposed to be in the quibbles of the law, may find a way to enter into engagements, and make bargains, in such a manner as to cheat some other party, without that party being able, as the phrase is, *to take the law of him.* This often happens in the cabalistical circle of what is called law. But when this is attempted to be acted on the national circle of treaties, it is too despicable to be defended, or to be permitted to exist. Yet this is the trick upon which Jay's Treaty is founded, so far as it has relation to the treaty preëxisting with France. It is a counter-treaty to that treaty and perverts all the great articles of that treaty to the injury of France, and makes them operate as a bounty to England, with whom France is at war.

The Washington Administration shows great desire that the treaty between France and the United

States be preserved. Nobody can doubt their sincerity upon this matter. There is not a British minister, a British merchant, or a British agent or sailor in America, that does not anxiously wish the same thing. The treaty with France serves now as a passport to supply England with naval stores and other articles of American produce, while the same articles, when coming to France, are made contraband or seizable by Jay's Treaty with England. The treaty with France says that neutral ships make neutral property, and thereby gives protection to English property on board American ships; and Jay's Treaty delivers up French property on board American ships to be seized by the English. It is too paltry to talk of faith, of national honor, and of the preservation of treaties, while such a barefaced treachery as this stares the world in the face.

The Washington Administration may save itself the trouble of proving to the French Government its *most faithful* intentions of preserving the treaty with France; for France has now no desire that it should be preserved. She had nominated an envoy extraordinary to America, to make Mr. Washington and his Government a present of the treaty, and to have no more to do with *that,* or with *him.* It was at the same time officially declared to the American Minister at

Paris, *that the French Republic had rather have the American Government for an open enemy than a treacherous friend.* This, Sir, together with the internal distractions caused in America, and the loss of character in the world, is the *eventful crisis*, alluded to in the beginning of this letter, to which your double politics have brought the affairs of your country. It is time that the eyes of America be opened upon you.

How France would have conducted herself toward America and American commerce, after all treaty stipulations had ceased, and under the sense of services rendered and injuries received, I know not. It is, however, an unpleasant reflection, that in all national quarrels, the innocent and even the friendly part of the community become involved with the culpable and the unfriendly; and as the accounts that arrived from America continued to manifest an invariable attachment in the general mass of the people to their original ally, in opposition to the newfangled Washington faction—the resolutions that had been taken in France were suspended. It happened also, fortunately enough, that Gouverneur Morris was not minister at this time.

There is, however, one point that still remains an embryo, and which, among other things, serves to

show the ignorance of Washington treaty-makers, and their inattention to preëxisting treaties, when they were employing themselves in framing or ratifying the new treaty with England.

The second article of the treaty of commerce between the United States and France says:

> The most Christian King and the United States engage mutually, not to grant any particular favor to other nations in respect of commerce and navigation that shall not immediately become common to the other party, who shall enjoy the same favor freely, if the concession was freely made, or on allowing the same compensation if the concession was conditional.

All the concessions, therefore, made to England by Jay's Treaty are, through the medium of this second article in the preëxisting treaty, made to France, and become ingrafted into the treaty with France, and can be exercised by her as a matter of right, the same as by England.

Jay's Treaty makes a concession to England, and that unconditionally, of seizing naval stores in American ships, and condemning them as contraband. It makes also a concession to England to seize provisions and *other articles* in American ships. *Other articles* are *all other articles*, and none but an ignoramus, or something worse, would have put such a

phrase into a treaty. The condition annexed in this case is that the provisions and other articles so seized are to be paid for at a price to be agreed upon.

Mr. Washington, as President, ratified this treaty after he knew the British Government had recommended an indiscriminate seizure of provisions and all other articles in American ships; and it is now known that those seizures were made to fit out the expedition going to Quiberon Bay, and it was known beforehand that they would be made.

The evidence goes also a good way to prove that Jay and Grenville understood each other upon that subject. Mr. Pinckney, [U. S. Minister to England] when he passed through France on his way to Spain, spoke of the recommencement of the seizures as a thing that would take place. The French Government had by some means received information from London to the same purpose, with the addition that the recommencement of the seizures would cause no misunderstanding between the British and American Governments.

Grenville, in defending himself against the opposition in Parliament, on account of the scarcity of corn, said (see his speech at the opening of the Parliament that met October 29, 1795) that *the supplies for the Quiberon expedition were furnished out*

of the American ships, and all the accounts received at that time from England stated that those seizures were made under the treaty.

After the supplies for the Quiberon expedition had been procured, and the expected success had failed, the seizures were countermanded; and had the French seized provision vessels going to England, it is probable that the Quiberon expedition could not have been attempted.

In one point of view, the treaty with England operates as a loan to the English Government. It gives permission to that Government to take American property at sea, to any amount, and pay for it when it suits her; and besides this, the treaty is in every point of view a surrender of the rights of American commerce and navigation, and a refusal to France of the rights of neutrality. The American flag is not now a neutral flag to France; Jay's Treaty of surrender gives a monopoly of it to England.

On the contrary, the treaty of commerce between America and France was formed on the most liberal principles, and calculated to give the greatest encouragement to the infant commerce of America. France was neither a carrier nor exporter of naval stores or provisions. Those articles belonged wholly to America, and they had all the protection in that treaty

which a treaty could give. But so much has that treaty been perverted that the liberality of it on the part of France has served to encourage Jay to form a counter-treaty with England; for he must have supposed the hands of France tied up by her treaty with America, when he was making such large concessions in favor of England.

The injury which Mr. Washington's Administration has done to the character as well as to the commerce of America is too great to be repaired by him. Foreign nations will be shy of making treaties with a government that has given the faithless example of perverting the liberality of a former treaty to the injury of the party with whom it was made.

In what a fraudulent light must Mr. Washington's character appear in the world, when his declarations and his conduct are compared together! Here follows the letter he wrote to the Committee of Public Safety, while Jay was negotiating in profound secrecy this treacherous treaty:

> George Washington, President of the United States of America, to the Representatives of the French people, members of the Committee of Public Safety of *the French Republic, the great and good friend and ally of the United States.*

On the intimation of the wish of the French Republic that a new Minister should be sent from the United States,

I resolved to manifest my sense of the readiness with which *my* request was fulfilled [that of recalling Genet], by immediately fulfilling the request of your Government [that of recalling Morris].

It was some time before a character could be obtained, worthy of the high office of expressing the attachmnet of the United States to the happiness of our allies, *and drawing closer the bonds of our friendship.* I have now made choice of James Monroe, one of our distinguished citizens, to reside near the French Republic, in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America.

He is instructed to bear to you our *sincere solicitude for your welfare, and to cultivate with zeal the cordiality so happily subsisting between us.* From a knowledge of his fidelity, probity, and good conduct, I have entire confidence that he will render himself acceptable to you, and give effect to your desire of preserving and *advancing, on all occasions, the interest and connection of the two nations.* I beseech you, therefore, to give full credence to whatever he shall say to you on the part of the United States, and *most of all, when he shall assure you that your prosperity is an object of our affection.* And I pray God to have the French Republic in His holy keeping.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Was it by entering into a treaty with England to surrender French property on board American ships to be seized by the English, while English property on board American ships was declared by the French treaty not to be seizable, *that the bonds of friendship*

between America and France were to be drawn the closer?

Was it by declaring naval stores contraband when coming to France, while by the French treaty they were not contraband when going to England, that the *connection between France and America was to be advanced?*

Was it by opening the American ports to the British navy in the present war, from which ports the same navy had been expelled by the aid solicited from France in the American war (and that aid gratuitously given) that the gratitude of America was to be shown, and the *solicitude* spoken of in the letter demonstrated?

As the letter was addressed to the Committee of Public Safety, Mr. Washington did not expect it would get abroad in the world, or be seen by any other eye than that of Robespierre, or be heard by any other ear than that of the Committee; that it would pass as a whisper across the Atlantic, from one dark chamber to the other, and there terminate. It was calculated to remove from the mind of the Committee all suspicion upon Jay's mission to England, and, in this point of view, it was suited to the circumstances of the movement then passing; but as the event of that mission has proved the letter to be

hypocritical, it serves no other purpose of the present moment than to show that the writer is not to be credited.

Two circumstances serve to make the reading of the letter necessary in the Convention. The one was that they who succeeded on the fall of Robespierre found it most proper to act with publicity; the other, to extinguish the suspicions which the strange conduct of Morris had occasioned in France.

When the British treaty, and the ratification of it by Mr. Washington, was known in France, all further declarations from him of his good disposition as an ally and friend passed for so many ciphers; but still it appeared necessary to him to keep up the farce of declarations. It is stipulated in the British treaty that commissioners are to report at the end of two years on the case of *neutral ships making neutral property*. In the meantime, neutral ships do *not* make neutral property, according to the British treaty, and they *do* according to the French treaty.

The preservation, therefore, of the French treaty became of great importance to England, as by that means she can employ American ships as carriers, while the same advantage is denied to France. Whether the French treaty could exist as a matter of right after this clandestine perversion of it could

not but give some apprehensions to the partisans of the British treaty, and it became necessary to them to make up, by fine words, what was wanting in good actions.

An opportunity offered to that purpose. The Convention, on the public reception of Mr. Monroe, ordered the American flag and the French flags to be displayed unitedly in the hall of the Convention. Mr. Monroe made a present of an American flag for the purpose. The Convention returned this compliment by sending a French flag to America, to be presented by their Minister, Mr. Adet, to the American Government. This resolution passed long before Jay's Treaty was known or suspected: it passed in the days of confidence; but the flag was not presented by Mr. Adet till several months after the treaty had been ratified. Mr. Washington made this the occasion of saying some fine things to the French Minister; and the better to get himself into tune to do this he began by saying the finest things of himself.

> Born, Sir (said he), in a land of liberty; *having* early learned its value; *having* engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it; *having*, in a word, devoted the best years of my life to secure its permanent establishment in my own country; *my* anxious recollections, *my* sympathetic feelings, and *my* best wishes are irresistibly excited, whenever,

in any country, I see an oppressed people unfurl the banner of freedom.

Mr. Washington, having expended so many fine phrases upon himself, was obliged to invent a new one for the French, and he calls them "wonderful people!" The coalesced powers acknowledged as much.

It is laughable to hear Mr. Washington talk of his *sympathetic feelings*, who has always been remarked, even among his friends, for not having any. He has, however, given no proofs of any to me. As to the pompous encomiums he so liberally pays to himself, on the score of the American Revolution, the reality of them may be questioned; and since he has forced them so much into notice, it is fair to examine his pretensions.

A stranger might be led to suppose, from the egotism with which Mr. Washington speaks, that himself, and himself only, had generated, conducted, completed, and established the Revolution: in fine, that it was all his own doing.

In the first place, as to the political part, he had no share in it; and, therefore, the whole of *that* is out of the question with respect to him. There remains, then, only the military part; and it would

have been prudent in Mr. Washington not to have awakened inquiry upon that subject. Fame then was cheap; he enjoyed it cheaply; and nobody was disposed to take away the laurels that, whether they were *acquired* or not, had been *given*.

Mr. Washington's merit consisted in constancy. But constancy was the common virtue of the Revolution. Who was there that was inconstant? I know but of one military defection, that of Arnold; and I know of no political defection among those who made themselves eminent when the Revolution was formed by the Declaration of Independence. Even Silas Deane, though he attempted to defraud, did not betray.

But when we speak of military character, something more is to be understood than constancy; and something more *ought* to be understood than the Fabian system of *doing nothing*. The *nothing* part can be done by anybody. Old Mrs. Thompson, the housekeeper of headquarters (who threatened to make the sun and the *wind* shine through Rivington * of New York), could not have done it as well as Mr. Washington. Deborah would have been as good as Barak.

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* A Tory publisher, whose press was demolished in 1775 by a Connecticut military mob.—*Editor.*

Mr. Washington had the nominal rank of Commander-in-Chief, but he was not so in fact. He had, in reality, only a separate command. He had no control over, or direction of, the army to the northward under Gates, that captured Burgoyne; nor of that to the South under [Nathanael] Greene, that recovered the Southern States. The nominal rank, however, of Commander-in-Chief served to throw upon him the lustre of those actions, and to make him appear as the soul and center of all military operations in America.

He commenced his command June, 1775, during the time the Massachusetts army lay before Boston, and after the affair of Bunker Hill. The commencement of his command was the commencement of inactivity. Nothing was afterwards done, or attempted to be done, during the nine months he remained before Boston.

If we may judge from the resistance made at Concord, and afterwards at Bunker Hill, there was a spirit of enterprise at that time, which the presence of Mr. Washington chilled into cold defense. By the advantage of a good exterior he attracts respect, which his habitual silence tends to preserve; but he has not the talent of inspiring ardor in an army. The enemy removed from Boston in March, 1776, to wait for re-

inforcements from Europe, and to take a more advantageous position at New York.

The inactivity of the campaign of 1775, on the part of General Washington, when the enemy had a less force than in any other future period of the war, and the injudicious choice of positions taken by him in the campaign of 1776, when the enemy had its greatest force, necessarily produced the losses and misfortunes that marked that gloomy campaign. The positions taken were either islands or necks of land. In the former, the enemy, by the aid of their ships, could bring their whole force against a part of General Washington's, as in the affair of Long Island; and in the latter, he might be shut up as in the bottom of a bag.

This had nearly been the case at New York, and it was so in part; it was actually the case at Fort Washington; and it would have been the case at Fort Lee, if General Greene had not moved precipitately off, leaving everything behind, and by gaining Hackensack bridge, got out of the bag of Bergen Neck.

How far Mr. Washington, as general, is blamable for these matters, I am not undertaking to determine; but they are evidently defects in military geography. The successful skirmishes at the close of that campaign (matters that would scarcely be noticed in a

better state of things) make the brilliant exploits of General Washington's seven campaigns. No wonder we see so much pusillanimity in the *President*, when we see so little enterprise in the *General!*

The campaign of 1777 became famous, not by anything on the part of General Washington, but by the capture of General Burgoyne, and the army under his command, by the Northern Army at Saratoga, under General Gates. So totally distinct and unconnected were the two armies of Washington and Gates, and so independent was the latter of the authority of the nominal Commander-in-Chief, that the two generals did not so much as correspond, and it was only by a letter of General (since Governor) Clinton, that General Washington was informed of that event. The British took possession of Philadelphia this year, which they evacuated the next, just time enough to save their heavy baggage and fleet of transports from capture by the French Admiral d'Estaing, who arrived at the mouth of the Delaware soon after.

The capture of Burgoyne gave an éclat in Europe to the American arms, and facilitated the alliance with France. The éclat, however, was not kept up by anything on the part of General Washington. The same unfortunate languor that marked his entrance into the field, continued always. Discontent began

to prevail strongly against him, and a party was formed in Congress, while sitting at York Town, in Pennsylvania, for removing him from the command of the army. The hope, however, of better times, the news of the alliance with France, and the unwillingness of showing discontent, dissipated the matter.

Nothing was done in the campaigns of 1778, 1779, 1780, in the part where General Washington commanded, except the taking of Stony Point by General Wayne. The Southern States in the meantime were over-run by the enemy. They were afterwards recovered by General Greene, who had in a very great measure created the army that accomplished that recovery.

In all this General Washington had no share. The Fabian system of war, followed by him, began now to unfold itself with all its evils; but what is Fabian war without Fabian means to support it? The finances of Congress, depending wholly on emissions of paper money, were exhausted. Its credit was gone. The Continental Treasury was not able to pay the expense of a brigade of wagons to transport the necessary stores to the army, and yet the sole object, the establishment of the Revolution, was a thing

of remote distance. The time I am now speaking of is in the latter end of the year 1780.

In this situation of things it was found not only expedient, but absolutely necessary, for Congress to state the whole case to its ally. I knew more of this matter (before it came into Congress or was known to General Washington), of its progress, and its issue, than I choose to state in this letter. Colonel John Laurens was sent to France as an envoy extraordinary on this occasion, and by a private agreement between him and me I accompanied him. We sailed from Boston in the *Alliance* frigate, February 11, 1781. France had already done much in accepting and paying bills drawn by Congress. She was now called upon to do more.

The event of Colonel Laurens's mission, with the aid of the venerable Minister, Franklin, was that France gave in money, as a present, six millions of livres, and ten millions more as a loan, and agreed to send a fleet of not less than thirty sail of the line, at her own expense, as an aid to America. Colonel Laurens and myself returned from Brest the first of June following, taking with us two millions and a half of livres (upwards of one hundred thousand pounds sterling) of the money given, and convoying two ships with stores.

We arrived at Boston the twenty-fifth of August following. De Grasse arrived with the French fleet in the Chesapeake at the same time, and was afterwards joined by that of Barras, making thirty-one sail of the line. The money was transported in wagons from Boston to the bank at Philadelphia, of which Mr. Thomas Willing, who has since put himself at the head of the list of petitioners in favor of the British treaty, was then president. And it was by the aid of this money, and this fleet, and of Rochambeau's army, that Cornwallis was taken; the laurels of which have been unjustly given to Mr. Washington. His merit in that affair was no more than that of any other American officer.

I have had, and still have, as much pride in the American Revolution as any man, or as Mr. Washington has a right to have; but that pride has never made me forgetful whence the great aid came that completed the business. Foreign aid (that of France) was calculated upon at the commencement of the Revolution. It is one of the subjects treated of in the pamphlet "Common Sense," but as a matter that could not be hoped for, unless independence was declared. The aid, however, was greater than could have been expected.

It is as well the ingratitude as the pusillanimity of Mr. Washington, and the Washington faction, that has brought upon America the loss of character she now suffers in the world, and the numerous evils her commerce has undergone, and to which it is yet exposed. The British Ministry soon found out what sort of men they had to deal with, and they dealt with them accordingly; and if further explanation was wanting, it has been fully given since, in the snivelling address of the New York Chamber of Commerce to the President, and in that of sundry merchants of Philadelphia which was not much better.

When the Revolution of America was finally established by the termination of the war, the world gave her credit for great character; and she had nothing to do but to stand firm upon that ground. The British Ministry had their hands too full of trouble to have provoked a rupture with her, had she shown a proper resolution to defend her rights. But encouraged as they were by the submissive character of the American Administration, they proceeded from insult to insult, till none more were left to be offered. The proposals made by Sweden and Denmark to the American Administration were disregarded. I know not if so much as an answer has been returned to them.

The Minister *penitentiary* (as some of the British prints called him), Mr. Jay, was sent on a pilgrimage to London to make up all by penance and petition. In the meantime the lengthy and drowsy writer of the pieces signed CAMILLUS held himself in reserve to vindicate everything; and to sound in America the tocsin of terror upon the inexhaustible resources of England. Her resources, says he, are greater than those of all the other powers. This man is so intoxicated with fear and finance that he knows not the difference between *plus* and *minus*—between a hundred pounds in hand and a hundred pounds worse than nothing.

The commerce of America, so far as it had been established by all the treaties that had been formed prior to that by Jay, was free, and the principles upon which it was established were good. That ground ought never to have been departed from. It was the justifiable ground of right, and no temporary difficulties ought to have induced an abandonment of it. The case is now otherwise. The ground, the scene, the pretensions, the everything, are changed. The commerce of America is, by Jay's Treaty, put under foreign dominion. The sea is not free for her. Her right to navigate it is reduced to the right of escap-

ing; that is, until some ship of England or France stops her vessels, and carries them into port. Every article of American produce, whether from the sea or the sand, fish, flesh, vegetable, or manufacture, is, by Jay's Treaty, made either contraband or seizable. Nothing is exempt.

In all other treaties of commerce, the article which enumerates the contraband articles, such as firearms, gunpowder, etc., is followed by another article which enumerates the articles not contraband: but it is not so in Jay's Treaty. There is no exempting article. Its place is supplied by the article for seizing and carrying into port; and the sweeping phrase of "provisions and *other articles*" includes everything. There never was such a base and servile treaty of surrender since treaties began to exist.

This is the ground upon which America now stands. All her rights of commerce and navigation are to begin anew, and that with loss of character to begin with. If there is sense enough left in the heart to call a blush into the cheek, the Washington Administration must be ashamed to appear. And as to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship (for so you have been to me, and that in the day of danger) and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be

puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any.

THOMAS PAINE.

OBSERVATIONS

PAINE made these observations while a guest of Monroe, the American Minister, in Paris, early in 1795, before Jay's Treaty with Great Britain was common knowledge. Just how Paine became informed of its terms is not clear, but his denunciation of the treaty anticipated that of the American people when, on July 2, 1795, its text was published in the "Aurora," the Anti-Federalist organ in Philadelphia. An outbreak of public wrath followed such as has seldom occurred in the history of the Republic. Jay was burned in effigy from New England to Georgia, and both he and Washington were declared to have been bought with British gold.

Threatened with impeachment, President Washington was driven to protest that the attacks were "so exaggerated and indecent as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket." Eventually Congress approved the treaty.

THE United States of America are negotiating with Spain respecting the free navigation of the Mississippi, and the territorial limits of this large river, in conformity with the treaty of peace, with England dated thirtieth November, 1782. As the brilliant successes of the French Republic have forced England to grant us what was in all justice our due, so the continuation of the prosperity of the Republic, will force Spain to make a treaty with us on the points in controversy.

Since it is certain that all that we shall obtain from Spain will be due to the victories of France, and as the inhabitants of the western part of the United States (which part contains or covers more than half

the United States), have decided to claim their rights to the free navigation of the Mississippi, would it not be a wiser policy for the Republican Government (who have only to command to obtain) to arrogate all the merit, by making our demands to Spain one of the conditions of France, to consent to restore peace to the Castilians?

They have only to declare they will not make peace, or that they will support with all their might, the just reclamations of their allies against these Powers —against England for the surrender of the frontier posts, and for the indemnities due through their depredations on our trade, and against Spain for our territorial limits, and the free navigation of the Mississippi. This declaration would certainly not prolong the war a single day more, nor cost the Republic an obole, while it would assure all the merit of success to France, and besides produce all the good effects mentioned above.

It may perhaps be observed that the negotiation is already finished with England, and perhaps in a manner which will not be approved of by France. That may be, (though the terms of this arrangement may not be known); but as to Spain, the negotiation is still pending, and it is evident that if France makes the above *Declaration* as to this Power (which dec-

laration would be a demonstrative proof of what she would have done in the other case if circumstances had required it), she would receive the same credit as if the Declaration had been made relatively to the two Powers.

In fact, the decree or resolution (and perhaps this last would be preferable) can be worded in terms which would declare that in case the arrangement with England were not satisfactory, France will nevertheless, maintain the just demands of America against that Power. A like declaration, in case Mr. Jay should do anything reprehensible, and which might even be approved of in America, would certainly raise the reputation of the French Republic to the most eminent degree of splendor, and lower in proportion that of her enemies.

It is very certain that France cannot better favor the views of the British party in America, and wound in a most sensible manner the Republican Government of this country, than by adopting a strict and oppressive policy with regard to us. Everyone knows that the injustices committed by the privateers and other ships belonging to the French Republic against our navigation were causes of exultation and joy to this party, even when their own properties were subjected to these depredations, while the friends of

France and the Revolution were vexed and most confused about it.

It follows then that a generous policy would produce quite opposite effects—it would acquire for France the merit that is her due; it would discourage the hopes of her adversaries, and furnish the friends of humanity and liberty with the means of acting against the intrigues of England, and cement the Union, and contribute toward the true interests of the two Republics.

So sublime and generous a manner of acting, which would not cost anything to France, would cement in a stronger way the ties between the two Republics. The effect of such an event, would confound and annihilate in an irrevocable manner all the partisans for the British in America.

There are nineteen-twentieths of our nation attached through inclination and gratitude to France, and the small number who seek uselessly all sorts of pretexts to magnify these small occasions of complaint which might have subsisted previously will find itself reduced to silence, or have to join their expressions of gratitude to ours.

The results of this event cannot be doubted, though not reckoned on: All the American hearts will be French, and England will be afflicted.

AN AMERICAN.

DISSERTATION ON FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

THIS pamphlet was first published in Paris early in July, 1795. It was originally written for circulation in Holland, where Paine's "Rights of Man" was not well known; but later it was used to influence the decision of the French National Convention on the Constitution then under discussion. That Constitution, adopted September twenty-third of the year mentioned, presently to be nullified by Napoleon, contained some features which Paine regarded as reactionary. Those to which he objected most earnestly are quoted by him in his speech in the Convention, which follows the accompanying dissertation.

In the Constitution as adopted Paine's preference for a plural Executive was established, and though the Council of Five Hundred and the Council of Ancients were not to his liking, his chief objection was based on his principle of manhood suffrage. Nine years previously Paine, in his "Dissertations on Government," had indicated a method of curbing the despotism of numbers.

THERE is no subject more interesting to every man than the subject of government. His security, be he rich or poor, and in a great measure his prosperity, are connected therewith; it is therefore his interest as well as his duty to make himself acquainted with its principles, and what the practise ought to be.

Every art and science, however imperfectly known at first, has been studied, improved and brought to what we call perfection by the progressive labors of succeeding generations; but the science of government has stood still. No improvement has been made in the principle and scarcely any in

the practise till the American Revolution began. In all the countries of Europe (except in France) the same forms and systems that were erected in the remote ages of ignorance still continue, and their antiquity is put in the place of principle; it is forbidden to investigate their orgin, or by what right they exist. If it be asked how has this happened, the answer is easy: they are established on a principle that is false, and they employ their power to prevent detection.

Notwithstanding the mystery with which the science of government has been enveloped, for the purpose of enslaving, plundering and imposing upon mankind, it is of all things the least mysterious and the most easy to be understood. The meanest capacity cannot be at a loss, if it begins its inquiries at the right point. Every art and science has some point, or alphabet, at which the study of that art or science begins, and by the assistance of which the progress is facilitated. The same method ought to be observed with respect to the science of government.

Instead then of embarrassing the subject in the outset with the numerous subdivisions under which different forms of government have been classed, such as aristocracy, democracy, oligarchy, monarchy, etc., the better method will be to begin with what may be

called primary divisions, or those under which all the several subdivisions will be comprehended.

The primary divisions are but two:

First, government by election and representation.

Secondly, government by hereditary succession.

All the several forms and systems of government, however numerous or diversified, class themselves under one or other of those primary divisions; for either they are on the system of representation, or on that of hereditary succession. As to that equivocal thing called mixed government, such as the late Government of Holland, and the present Government of England, it does not make an exception to the general rule, because the parts separately considered are either representative or hereditary.

Beginning then our inquiries at this point, we have first to examine into the nature of those two primary divisions. If they are equally right in principle, it is mere matter of opinion which we prefer. If the one be demonstratively better than the other that difference directs our choice; but if one of them should be so absolutely false as not to have a right of existence the matter settles itself at once; because a negative proved on one thing, where two only are offered, and one must be accepted, amounts to an affirmative on the other.

The revolutions that are now spreading themselves in the world have their origin in this state of the case, and the present war is a conflict between the representative system founded on the rights of the people, and the hereditary system founded in usurpation. As to what are called monarchy, royalty and aristocracy, they do not, either as things or as terms, sufficiently describe the hereditary system; they are but secondary things or signs of the hereditary system, and which fall of themselves if that system has not a right to exist.

Were there no such terms as monarchy, royalty and aristocracy, or were other terms substituted in their place, the hereditary system, if it continued, would not be altered thereby. It would be the same system under any other titulary name as it is now.

The character therefore of the revolutions of the present day distinguishes itself most definitively by grounding itself on the system of representative government, in opposition to the hereditary. No other distinction reaches the whole of the principle.

Having thus opened the case generally, I proceed, in the first place, to examine the hereditary system because it has the priority in point of time. The representative system is the invention of the modern world; and, that no doubt may arise as to my own

opinion, I declare it beforehand, which is, *that there is not a problem in Euclid more mathematically true than that hereditary government has not a right to exist. When therefore we take from any man the exercise of hereditary power we take away that which he never had the right to possess, and which no law or custom could, or ever can, give him a title to.*

The arguments that have hitherto been employed against the hereditary system have been chiefly founded upon the absurdity of it, and its incompetency to the purpose of good government. Nothing can present to our judgment, or to our imagination, a figure of greater absurdity, than that of seeing the government of a nation fall, as it frequently does, into the hands of a lad necessarily destitute of experience, and often little better than a fool. It is an insult to every man of years, of character, and of talents, in a country.

The moment we begin to reason upon the hereditary system, it falls into derision; let but a single idea begin and a thousand will soon follow. Insignificance, imbecility, childhood, dotage, want of moral character; in fine, every defect, serious or laughable, unite to hold up the hereditary system as a figure of ridicule. Leaving, however, the ridiculousness of the thing to the reflections of the reader, I proceed

to the more important part of the question, namely, whether such a system has a right to exist.

To be satisfied of the right of a thing to exist, we must be satisfied that it had a right to begin. If it had not a right to begin, it has not the right to continue. By what right then did the hereditary system begin? Let a man but ask himself this question, and he will find that he cannot satisfy himself with an answer.

The right which any man or any family had to set itself up at first to govern a nation, and to establish itself hereditarily, was no other than the right which Robespierre had to do the same thing in France. If he had none, they had none. If they had any, he had as much; for it is impossible to discover superiority of right in any family, by virtue of which hereditary government could begin. The Capets, the Guelphs, the Robespierres, the Marats, are all on the same standing as to the question of right. It belongs exclusively to none.

It is one step toward liberty to perceive that hereditary government could not begin as an exclusive right in any family. The next point will be whether, having once begun, it could grow into a right by the influence of time.

This would be supposing an absurdity; for either it is putting time in the place of principle, or making it superior to principle; whereas time has no more connection with, or influence upon principle, than principle has upon time. The wrong which began a thousand years ago is as much a wrong as if it began to-day; and the right which originates to-day is as much a right as if it had the sanction of a thousand years.

Time with respect to principles is an eternal NOW: it has no operation upon them: it changes nothing of their nature and qualities. But what have we to do with a thousand years? Our lifetime is but a short portion of that period, and if we find the wrong in existence as soon as we begin to live, that is the point of time at which it begins to us; and our right to resist it is the same as if it never existed before.

As hereditary government could not begin as a natural right in any family, nor derive after its commencement any right from time, we have only to examine whether there exist in a nation a right to set it up, and establish it by what is called law, as has been done in England. I answer NO; and that any law or any constitution made for that purpose is an act of treason against the right of every minor in the

nation, at the time it is made, and against the rights of all succeeding generations.

I shall speak upon each of those cases. First, of the minor at the time such law is made. Secondly, of the generations that are to follow.

A nation, in a collective sense, comprehends all the individuals of whatever age, from just born to just dying. Of these, one part will be minors and the other aged. The average of life is not exactly the same in every climate and country, but in general the minority in years are the majority in numbers; that is, the number of persons under twenty-one years, is greater than the number of persons above that age.

This difference in number is not necessary to the establishment of the principle I mean to lay down, but it serves to show the justice of it more strongly. The principle would be equally as good if the majority in years were also the majority in numbers.

The rights of minors are as sacred as the rights of the aged. The difference is altogether in the different age of the two parties, and nothing in the nature of the rights; the rights are the same rights; and are to be preserved inviolate for the inheritance of the minors when they shall come of age. During the minority of minors their rights are under the sacred guardianship of the aged.

The minor cannot surrender them; the guardian cannot dispossess him; consequently, the aged part of a nation, who are the law-makers for the *time being*, and who, in the march of life are but a few years ahead of those who are yet minors, and to whom they must shortly give place, have not and cannot have the right to make a law to set up and establish hereditary government, or, to speak more distinctly, *an hereditary succession of governors;* because it is an attempt to deprive every minor in the nation, at the time such a law is made, of his inheritance of rights when he shall come of age, and to subjugate him to a system of government to which, during his minority, he could neither consent nor object.

If a person who is a minor at the time such a law is proposed, had happened to have been born a few years sooner, so as to be of the age of twenty-one years at the time of proposing it, his right to have objected against it, to have exposed the injustice and tyrannical principles of it and to have voted against it, will be admitted on all sides.

If, therefore, the law operates to prevent his exercising the same rights after he comes of age as he would have had a right to exercise had he been of age at the time, it is undeniably a law to take away and annul the rights of every person in the nation

who shall be a minor at the time of making such a law, and consequently the right to make it cannot exist.

I come now to speak of government by hereditary succession, as it applies to succeeding generations; and to show that in this case, as in the case of minors, there does not exit in a nation a right to set it up.

A nation, though continually existing, is continually in a state of renewal and succession. It is never stationary. Every day produces new births, carries minors forward to maturity, and old persons from the stage. In this ever running flood of generations there is no part superior in authority to another. Could we conceive an idea of superiority in any, at what point of time, or in what century of the world, are we to fix it? To what cause are we to ascribe it? By what evidence are we to prove it? By what criterion are we to know it?

A single reflection will teach us that our ancestors, like ourselves, were but tenants for life in the great freehold of rights. The fee-absolute was not in them, it is not in us, it belongs to the whole family of man through all ages. If we think otherwise than this we think either as slaves or as tyrants. As slaves, if we think that any former generation had a right to bind

us; as tyrants, if we think that we have authority to bind the generations that are to follow.

It may not be inapplicable to the subject, to endeavor to define what is to be understood by a generation in the sense the word is here used.

As a natural term its meaning is sufficiently clear. The father, the son, the grandson, are so many distinct generations. But when we speak of a generation as describing the persons in whom legal authority resides, as distinct from another generation of the same description who are to succeed them, it comprehends all those who are above the age of twenty-one years, at the time that we count from; and a generation of this kind will continue in authority between fourteen and twenty-one years, that is, until the number of minors, who shall have arrived at age, shall be greater than the number of persons remaining of the former stock.

For example: If France, at this or any other moment, contains twenty-four millions of souls, twelve millions will be males, and twelve females. Of the twelve millions of males, six millions will be of the age of twenty-one years, and six will be under, and the authority to govern will reside in the first six.

But every day will make some alteration, and in twenty-one years every one of those minors who sur-

vives will have arrived at age, and the greater part of the former stock will be gone: the majority of persons then living, in whom the legal authority resides, will be composed of those who, twenty-one years before, had no legal existence. Those will be fathers and grandfathers in their turn, and, in the next twenty-one years (or less) another race of minors, arrived at age, will succeed them, and so on.

As this is ever the case, and as every generation is equal in rights to another, it consequently follows, that there cannot be a right in any to establish government by hereditary succession, because it would be supposing itself possessed of a right superior to the rest, namely, that of commanding by its own authority how the world shall be hereafter governed, and who shall govern it.

Every age and generation is, and must be (as a matter of right), as free to act for itself in all cases, as the age and generation that preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man, neither has one generation a property in the generations that are to follow.

In the first part of the "Rights of Man" I have spoken of government by hereditary succession; and

I will here close the subject with an extract from that work, which states it under the two following heads.*

The history of the English Parliament furnishes an example of this kind; and which merits to be recorded as being the greatest instance of legislative ignorance and want of principle that is to be found in any country. The case is as follows:

The English Parliament of 1688, imported a man and his wife from Holland, *William* and *Mary*, and made them King and Queen of England. Having done this, the said Parliament made a law to convey the government of the country to the heirs of William and Mary, in the following words: "We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, do, in the name of the people of England, most humbly and faithfully submit *ourselves, our heirs and posterities*, to William and Mary, *their heirs and posterities*, forever." And in a subsequent law, as quoted by Edmund Burke, the said Parliament, in the name of the people of England then living, *binds the said people, their heirs and posterities, to William and Mary, their heirs and posterities, to the end of time.*

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* The omitted quotation will be found in vol. VI, p. 169, of the present edition, beginning with the words "First, The right of a particular family," down to the paragraph on p. 173, ending "Good Lord deliver the world."—*Editor.*

It is not sufficient that we laugh at the ignorance of such law-makers; it is necessary that we reprobate their want of principle. The Constituent Assembly of France, 1789, fell into the same vice as the Parliament of England had done, and assumed to establish an hereditary succession in the family of the Capets as an act of the Constitution of that year.

That every nation, *for the time being*, has a right to govern itself as it pleases, must always be admitted; but government by hereditary succession is government for another race of people, and not for itself; and as those on whom it is to operate are not yet in existence, or are minors, so neither is the right in existence to set it up for them, and to assume such a right is treason against the right of posterity.

I here close the arguments on the first head, that of government by hereditary succession; and proceed to the second, that of government by election and representation; or, as it may be concisely expressed, *representative government*, in contradistinction to *hereditary government*.

Reasoning by exclusion, if *hereditary government* has not a right to exist, and that it has not is provable, *representative government* is admitted of course.

In contemplating government by election and representation, we amuse not ourselves in inquiring

when or how, or by what right, it began. Its origin is ever in view. Man is himself the origin and the evidence of the right. It appertains to him in right of his existence, and his person is the title deed.*

The true and only true basis of representative government is equality of rights. Every man has a right to one vote, and no more in the choice of representatives. The rich have no more right to exclude the poor from the right of voting, or of electing and being elected, than the poor have to exclude the rich; and wherever it is attempted, or proposed, on either side, it is a question of force and not of right. Who is he that would exclude another? That other has a right to exclude him.

That which is now called aristocracy implies an inequality of rights; but who are the persons that have a right to establish this inequality? Will the rich exclude themselves? No. Will the poor exclude themselves? No. By what right then can any be excluded? It would be a question, if any man or class of men have a right to exclude themselves; but, be this as it may, they cannot have the

* Alexander Hamilton wrote, in 1775: "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature by the hand of Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power."

right to exclude another. The poor will not delegate such a right to the rich, nor the rich to the poor, and to assume it is not only to assume arbitrary power, but to assume a right to commit robbery.

Personal rights, of which the right of voting for representatives is one, are a species of property of the most sacred kind: and he that would employ his pecuniary property, or presume upon the influence it gives him, to dispossess or rob another of his property or rights, uses that pecuniary property as he would use fire-arms, and merits to have it taken from him.

Inequality of rights is created by a combination in one part of the community to exclude another part from its rights. Whenever it be made an article of a constitution, or a law, that the right of voting, or of electing and being elected, shall appertain exclusively to persons possessing a certain quantity of property, be it little or much, it is a combination of the persons possessing that quantity to exclude those who do not possess the same quantity. It is investing themselves with powers as a self-created part of society, to the exclusion of the rest.

It is always to be taken for granted, that those who oppose an equality of rights never mean the exclusion should take place on themselves; and in

this view of the case, pardoning the vanity of the thing, aristocracy is a subject of laughter. This self-soothing vanity is encouraged by another idea not less selfish, which is that the opposers conceive they are playing a safe game, in which there is a chance to gain and none to lose; that at any rate the doctrine of equality includes *them*, and that if they cannot get more rights than those whom they oppose and would exclude they shall not have less.

This opinion has already been fatal to thousands, who, not contented with *equal rights*, have sought more till they lost all, and experienced in themselves the degrading *inequality* they endeavored to fix upon others.

In any view of the case it is dangerous and impolitic, sometimes ridiculous, and always unjust to make property the criterion of the right of voting. If the sum or value of the property upon which the right is to take place be considerable it will exclude a majority of the people and unite them in a common interest against the government and against those who support it; and as the power is always with the majority, they can overturn such a government and its supporters whenever they please.

If, in order to avoid this danger, a small quantity of property be fixed, as the criterion of the right, it

exhibits liberty in disgrace, by putting it in competition with accident and insignificance. When a broodmare shall fortunately produce a foal or a mule that, by being worth the sum in question, shall convey to its owner the right of voting, or by its death take it from him, in whom does the origin of such a right exist? Is it in the man, or in the mule? When we consider how many ways property may be acquired without merit, and lost without crime, we ought to spurn the idea of making it a criterion of rights.

But the offensive part of the case is that this exclusion from the right of voting implies a stigma on the moral character of the persons excluded; and this is what no part of the community has a right to pronounce upon another part. No external circumstance can justify it: wealth is no proof of moral character; nor poverty of the want of it.

On the contrary, wealth is often the presumptive evidence of dishonesty; and poverty the negative evidence of innocence. If therefore property, whether little or much, be made a criterion, the means by which that property has been acquired ought to be made a criterion also.

The only ground upon which exclusion from the right of voting is consistent with justice would be to inflict it as a punishment for a certain time upon

those who should propose to take away that right from others. The right of voting for representatives is the primary right by which other rights are protected.

To take away this right is to reduce a man to slavery, for slavery consists in being subject to the will of another, and he that has not a vote in the election of representatives is in this case. The proposal therefore to disfranchise any class of men is as criminal as the proposal to take away property.

When we speak of right we ought always to unite with it the idea of duties: rights become duties by reciprocity. The right which I enjoy becomes my duty to guarantee it to another, and he to me; and those who violate the duty justly incur a forfeiture of the right.

In a political view of the case, the strength and permanent security of government is in proportion to the number of people interested in supporting it. The true policy therefore is to interest the whole by an equality of rights, for the danger arises from exclusions. It is possible to exclude men from the right of voting, but it is impossible to exclude them from the right of rebelling against that exclusion; and when all other rights are taken away the right of rebellion is made perfect.

While men could be persuaded they had no rights, or that rights appertained only to a certain class of men, or that government was a thing existing in right of itself, it was not difficult to govern them authoritatively. The ignorance in which they were held, and the superstition in which they were instructed, furnished the means of doing it.

But when the ignorance is gone, and the superstition with it; when they perceive the imposition that has been acted upon them; when they reflect that the cultivator and the manufacturer are the primary means of all the wealth that exists in the world, beyond what nature spontaneously produces; when they begin to feel their consequence by their usefulness, and their right as members of society, it is then no longer possible to govern them as before. The fraud once detected cannot be re-acted. To attempt it is to provoke derision, or invite destruction.

That property will ever be unequal is certain. Industry, superiority of talents, dexterity of management, extreme frugality, fortunate opportunities, or the opposite, or the means of those things, will ever produce that effect, without having recourse to the harsh, ill-sounding names of avarice and oppression; and besides this there are some men who, though they do not despise wealth, will not stoop to the drudgery

or the means of acquiring it, nor will be troubled with it beyond their wants or their independence; while in others there is an avidity to obtain it by every means not punishable; it makes the sole business of their lives, and they follow it as a religion. All that is required with respect to property is to obtain it honestly, and not employ it criminally; but it is always criminally employed when it is made a criterion for exclusive rights.

In institutions that are purely pecuniary, such as that of a bank or a commercial company, the rights of the members composing that company are wholly created by the property they invest therein; and no other rights are represented in the government of that company than what arise out of that property; neither has that government cognizance of *anything but property*.

But the case is totally different with respect to the institution of civil government, organized on the system of representation. Such a government has cognizance of *everything*, and of *every man* as a member of the national society, whether he has property or not; and, therefore, the principle requires that *every man*, and *every kind of right*, be represented, of which the right to acquire and to hold property is but one, and that not of the most essential kind.

The protection of a man's person is more sacred than the protection of property; and besides this, the faculty of performing any kind of work or services by which he acquires a livelihood, or maintaining his family, is of the nature of property. It is property to him; he has acquired it; and it is as much the object of his protection as exterior property, possessed without that faculty, can be the object of protection in another person.

I have always believed that the best security for property, be it much or little, is to remove from every part of the community, as far as can possibly be done, every cause of complaint, and every motive to violence; and this can only be done by an equality of rights. When rights are secure, property is secure in consequence. But when property is made a pretense for unequal or exclusive rights, it weakens the right to hold the property, and provokes indignation and tumult; for it is unnatural to believe that property can be secure under the guarantee of a society injured in its rights by the influence of that property.

Next to the injustice and ill-policy of making property a pretense for exclusive rights, is the unaccountable absurdity of giving to mere *sound* the idea of property, and annexing to it certain rights; for what else is a *title* but sound? Nature is often giving to

the world some extraordinary men who arrive at fame by merit and universal consent, such as Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, etc. They were truly great or noble. But when government sets up a manufactory of nobles, it is as absurd as if she undertook to manufacture wise men. Her nobles are all counterfeits.

This wax-work order has assumed the name of aristocracy; and the disgrace of it would be lessened if it could be considered only as childish imbecility. We pardon foppery because of its insignificance, and on the same ground we might pardon the foppery of titles. But the origin of aristocracy was worse than foppery. It was robbery. The first aristocrats in all countries were brigands. Those of later times, sycophants.

It is very well known that in England (and the same will be found in other countries), the great landed estates now held in descent were plundered from the quiet inhabitants at the Conquest. The possibility did not exist of acquiring such estates honestly. If it be asked how they could have been acquired, no answer but that of robbery can be given. That they were not acquired by trade, by commerce, by manufactures, by agriculture, or by any reputable employment, is certain.

How then were they acquired? Blush, aristocracy, to hear your origin, for your progenitors were thieves. They were the Robespierres and the Jacobins of that day. When they had committed the robbery, they endeavored to lose the disgrace of it by sinking their real names under fictitious ones, which they called titles. It is ever the practise of felons to act in this manner. They never pass by their real names.

As property, honestly obtained, is best secured by an equality of rights, so ill-gotten property depends for protection on a monopoly of rights. He who has robbed another of his property, will next endeavor to disarm him of his rights, to secure that property; for when the robber becomes the legislator he believes himself secure. That part of the Government of England that is called the House of Lords, was originally composed of persons who had committed the robberies of which I have been speaking. It was an association for the protection of the property they had stolen.

But besides the criminality of the origin of aristocracy, it has an injurious effect on the moral and physical character of man. Like slavery it debilitates the human faculties; for as the mind bowed down by slavery loses in silence its elastic powers, so, in the contrary extreme, when it is buoyed up by folly, it

becomes incapable of exerting them, and dwindles into imbecility. It is impossible that a mind employed upon ribands and titles can ever be great. The childishness of the objects consumes the man.

It is at all times necessary, and more particularly so during the progress of a revolution, and until right ideas confirm themselves by habit, that we frequently refresh our patriotism by reference to first principles. It is by tracing things to their origin that we learn to understand them: and it is by keeping that line and that origin always in view that we never forget them.

An inquiry into the origin of rights will demonstrate to us that *rights* are not *gifts* from one man to another, nor from one class of men to another; for who is he who could be the first giver, or by what principle, or on what authority, could he possess the right of giving?

A declaration of rights is not a creation of them, nor a donation of them. It is a manifest of the principle by which they exist, followed by a detail of what the rights are; for every civil right has a natural right for its foundation, and it includes the principle of a reciprocal guarantee of those rights from man to man. As, therefore, it is impossible to discover any origin of rights otherwise than in the origin of

man, it consequently follows, that rights appertain to man in right of his existence only, and must therefore be equal to every man.

The principle of an *equality of rights* is clear and simple. Every man can understand it, and it is by understanding his rights that he learns his duties; for where the rights of men are equal, every man must finally see the necessity of protecting the rights of others as the most effectual security for his own.

But if, in the formation of a constitution, we depart from the principle of equal rights, or attempt any modification of it, we plunge into a labyrinth of difficulties from which there is no way out but by retreating. Where are we to stop? Or by what principle are we to find out the point to stop at, that shall discriminate between men of the same country, part of whom shall be free, and the rest not?

If property is to be made the criterion, it is a total departure from every moral principle of liberty, because it is attaching rights to mere matter, and making man the agent of that matter. It is, moreover, holding up property as an apple of discord, and not only exciting but justifying war against it; for I maintain the principle, that when property is used as an instrument to take away the rights of those who may happen

not to possess property, it is used to an unlawful purpose, as fire-arms would be in a similar case.

In a state of nature all men are equal in rights, but they are not equal in power; the weak cannot protect themselves against the strong. This being the case, the institution of civil society is for the purpose of making an equalization of powers that shall be parallel to, and a guarantee of, the equality of rights. The laws of a country, when properly constructed, apply to this purpose.

Every man takes the arm of the law for his protection as more effectual than his own; and therefore every man has an equal right in the formation of the government, and of the laws by which he is to be governed and judged. In extensive countries and societies, such as America and France, this right in the individual can only be exercised by delegation, that is, by election and representation; and hence it is that the institution of representative government arises.

Hitherto, I have confined myself to matters of principle only. First, that hereditary government has not a right to exist; that it cannot be established on any principle of right; and that it is a violation of all principle. Secondly, that government by election and representation has its origin in the nat-

ural and eternal rights of man; for whether a man be his own lawgiver, as he would be in a state of nature; or whether he exercises his portion of legislative sovereignty in his own person, as might be the case in small democracies where all could assemble for the formation of the laws by which they were to be governed; or whether he exercises it in the choice of persons to represent him in a national assembly of representatives, the origin of the right is the same in all cases. The first, as is before observed, is defective in power; the second, is practicable only in democracies of small extent; the third, is the greatest scale upon which human government can be instituted.

Next to matters of *principle* are matters of *opinion*, and it is necessary to distinguish between the two. Whether the rights of men shall be equal is not a matter of opinion but of right, and consequently of principle; for men do not hold their rights as grants from each other, but each one in right of himself. Society is the guardian but not the giver. And as in extensive societies, such as America and France, the right of the individual in matters of government cannot be exercised but by election and representation, it consequently follows that the only system of government consistent with principle, where simple

democracy is impracticable, is the representative system.

But as to the organical part, or the manner in which the several parts of government shall be arranged and composed, it is altogether *matter of opinion.* It is necessary that all the parts be conformable with the *principle of equal rights;* and so long as this principle be religiously adhered to, no very material error can take place, neither can any error continue long in that part which falls within the province of opinion.

In all matters of opinion, the social compact, or the principle by which society is held together, requires that the majority of opinions becomes the rule for the whole, and that the minority yields practical obedience thereto. This is perfectly conformable to the principle of equal rights: for, in the first place, every man has *a right to give an opinion* but no man has a right that his opinion should *govern the rest.* In the second place, it is not supposed to be known beforehand on which side of any question, whether for or against, any man's opinion will fall. He may happen to be in a majority upon some questions, and in a minority upon others; and by the same rule that he expects obedience in the one case, he must yield it in the other.

All the disorders that have arisen in France during the progress of the Revolution have had their origin, not in the *principle of equal rights,* but in the violation of that principle. The principle of equal rights has been repeatedly violated, and that not by the majority but by the minority, and *that minority has been composed of men possessing property, as well as of men without property; property, therefore, even upon the experience already had, is no more a criterion of character than it is of rights.*

It will sometimes happen that the minority are right, and the majority are wrong, but as soon as experience proves this to be the case, the minority will increase to a majority, and the error will reform itself by the tranquil operation of freedom of opinion and equality of rights. Nothing, therefore, can justify an insurrection, neither can it ever be necessary where rights are equal and opinions free.

Taking then the principle of equal rights as the foundation of the Revolution, and consequently of the Constitution, the organical part, or the manner in which the several parts of the Government shall be arranged in the Constitution, will, as is already said, fall within the province of opinion.

Various methods will present themselves upon a question of this kind, and though experience is yet

wanting to determine which is the best, it has, I think, sufficiently decided which is the worst. That is the worst, which in its deliberations and decisions is subject to the precipitancy and passion of an individual; and when the whole legislature is crowded into one body it is an individual in mass. In all cases of deliberation it is necessary to have a corps of reserve, and it would be better to divide the representation by lot into two parts, and let them revise and correct each other, than that the whole should sit together, and debate at once.

Representative government is not necessarily confined to any one particular form. The principle is the same in all the forms under which it can be arranged. The equal rights of the people is the root from which the whole springs, and the branches may be arranged as present opinion or future experience shall best direct. As to that *hospital of incurables* (as Chesterfield calls it), the British House of Peers, it is an excrescence growing out of corruption; and there is no more affinity or resemblance between any of the branches of a legislative body originating from the right of the people, and the aforesaid House of Peers, than between a regular member of the human body and an ulcerated wen.

As to that part of government that is called the *executive,* it is necessary in the first place to fix a precise meaning to the word.

There are but two divisions into which power can be arranged. First, that of willing or decreeing the laws; secondly, that of executing or putting them in practise. The former corresponds to the intellectual faculties of the human mind which reasons and determines what shall be done; the second, to the mechanical powers of the human body that puts that determination into practise.

If the former decides, and the latter does not perform, it is a state of imbecility; and if the latter acts without the predetermination of the former, it is a state of lunacy. The executive department therefore is official, and is subordinate to the legislative, as the body is to the mind in a state of health; for it is impossible to conceive the idea of two sovereignties, a sovereignty to *will* and a sovereignty to *act.*

The executive is not invested with the power of deliberating whether it shall act or not; it has no discretionary authority in the case; for it can *act no other thing* than what the laws decree, and it is *obliged* to act conformably thereto; and in this view of the case the executive is made up of all the official

departments that execute the laws, of which that which is called the judiciary is the chief.

But mankind have conceived an idea that *some kind of authority* is necessary to *superintend* the execution of the laws and to see that they are faithfully performed; and it is by confounding this superintending authority with the official execution that we get embarrassed about the term *executive power*. All the parts in the governments of the United States of America that are called THE EXECUTIVE, are no other than authorities to superintend the execution of the laws; and they are so far independent of the legislative that they know the legislative only through the laws, and cannot be controlled or directed by it through any other medium.

In what manner this superintending authority shall be appointed, or composed, is a matter that falls within the province of opinion. Some may prefer one method and some another; and in all cases, where opinion only and not principle is concerned, the majority of opinions forms the rule for all.

There are however some things deducible from reason, and evidenced by experience, that serve to guide our decision upon the case. The one is never to invest any individual with extraordinary power; for besides his being tempted to misuse it, it will

excite contention and commotion in the nation for the office. Secondly, never to invest power long in the hands of any number of individuals. The inconveniences that may be supposed to accompany frequent changes are less to be feared than the danger that arises from long continuance.

I shall conclude this discourse with offering some observations on the means of *preserving liberty;* for it is not only necessary that we establish it, but that we preserve it.

It is, in the first place, necessary that we distinguish between the means made use of to overthrow despotism, in order to prepare the way for the establishment of liberty, and the means to be used after the despotism is overthrown.

The means made use of in the first case are justified by necessity. Those means are, in general, insurrections; for while the established government of despotism continues in any country it is scarcely possible that any other means can be used. It is also certain that in the commencement of a revolution, the revolutionary party permit to themselves a *discretionary exercise of power* regulated more by circumstances than by principle, which, were the practise to continue, liberty would never be established, or if established would soon be overthrown. It is never

to be expected in a revolution that every man is to change his opinion at the same moment.

There never yet was any truth or any principle so irresistibly obvious that all men believed it at once. Time and reason must coöperate with each other to the final establishment of any principle; and therefore those who may happen to be first convinced have not a right to persecute others, on whom conviction operates more slowly. The moral principle of revolutions is to instruct, not to destroy.

Had a constitution been established two years ago (as ought to have been done), the violences that have since desolated France and injured the character of the Revolution, would, in my opinion, have been prevented. The nation would then have had a bond of union, and every individual would have known the line of conduct he was to follow. But, instead of this, a revolutionary government, a thing without either principle or authority, was substituted in its place; virtue and crime depended upon accident; and that which was patriotism one day became treason the next.

All these things have followed from the want of a constitution; for it is the nature and intention of a constitution to *prevent governing by party*, by establishing a common principle that shall limit and con-

trol the power and impulse of party, and that says to all parties, *thus far shalt thou go and no further.* But in the absence of a constitution, men look entirely to party; and instead of principle governing party, party governs principle.

An avidity to punish is always dangerous to liberty. It leads men to stretch, to misinterpret, and to misapply even the best of laws. He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.

THOMAS PAINE.

Paris, July, 1795.

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1795

Speech in the French National Convention, July 7, 1795

PAINE'S return to the French Convention after his imprisonment was marked by an impressive scene. A special motion was made by Lanthenas and unanimously adopted, "that permission be granted Thomas Paine to deliver his sentiments on the Declaration of Rights and the Constitution." Although Paine had been recalled to the Convention on December 7, 1794, it was not until seven months later that he took his seat. With feeble step he ascended the tribune, and stood while a secretary read his speech. It was delivered against a foregone conclusion, in what may be called "a packed Convention." This was Paine's last appearance in that body. Out of it he naturally dropped when it ended (October 26, 1795) with the organization of the Directory. Being an American he would not accept candidature in a foreign government.

ON the motion of Lanthenas, "That permission be granted to Thomas Paine, to deliver his sentiments on the Declaration of Rights and the Constitution," Thomas Paine ascended the tribune; and no opposition being made to the motion, one of the secretaries, who stood by Mr. Paine, read his speech, of which the following is a literal translation:

CITIZENS:

The effects of a malignant fever with which I was afflicted during a rigorous confinement in the Luxembourg, have thus long prevented me from attending at my post in the bosom of the Convention, and the magnitude of the subject

under discussion, and no other consideration on earth, could induce me now to repair to my station.

A recurrence to the vicissitudes I have experienced, and the critical situations in which I have been placed in consequence of the French Revolution, will throw upon what I now propose to submit to the Convention the most unequivocal proofs of my integrity, and the rectitude of those principles which have uniformly influenced my conduct.

In England I was proscribed for having vindicated the French Revolution, and I have suffered a rigorous imprisonment in France for having pursued a similar mode of conduct. During the reign of terrorism, I was a close prisoner for eight long months, and remained so above three months after the era of the tenth Thermidor. I ought, however, to state, that I was not persecuted by the *people* either of England or France. The proceedings in both countries were the effects of the despotism existing in their respective governments. But, even if my persecution had originated in the people at large, my principles and conduct would still have remained the same. Principles which are influenced and subject to the control of tyranny have not their foundation in the heart.

A few days ago I transmitted to you by the ordinary mode of distribution a short treatise entitled "Dissertation on the First Principles of Government." This little work I did intend to have dedicated to the people of Holland, who, about the time I began to write it, were determined to accomplish a revolution in their government, rather than to the people of France, who had long before effected that glorious object. But there are, in the Constitution which is about to be ratified by the Convention, certain articles, and in the report which preceded it certain points so repugnant to reason and incompatible with the true principles of liberty as to render this treatise, drawn up for another purpose, applicable to the present occasion, and under this impression I presumed to submit it to your consideration.

If there be faults in the Constitution, it were better to expunge them now than to abide the event of their mischievous tendency; for certain it is that the plan of the Constitution which has been presented to you is not consistent with the grand object of the Revolution, nor congenial to the sentiments of the individuals who accomplished it.

To deprive half the people in a nation of their rights as citizens is an easy matter in theory or on

paper; but it is a most dangerous experiment, and rarely practicable in the execution.

I shall now proceed to the observations I have to offer on this important subject; and I pledge myself that they shall be neither numerous nor diffusive.

In my apprehension, a constitution embraces two distinct parts or objects, the *Principle* and the *Practise;* and it is not only an essential but an indispensable provision that the practise should emanate from, and accord with, the principle. Now I maintain, that the reverse of this proposition is the case in the plan of the Constitution under discussion. The first article, for instance, of the *political state* of citizens, (v. Title ii. of the Constitution,) says:

"Every man born and resident in France, who, being twenty-one years of age, has inscribed his name on the civic register of his canton, and who has lived afterwards one year on the territory of the Republic, and who pays any direct contribution whatever, real or personal, is a French citizen."

I might here ask, if those only who come under the above description are to be considered as citizens, what designation do you mean to give the rest of the people? I allude to that portion of the people on whom the principal part of the labor falls, and on whom the weight of indirect taxation will in the event

chiefly press. In the structure of the social fabric this class of people are infinitely superior to that privileged order whose only qualification is their wealth or territorial possessions. For what is trade without merchants? What is land without cultivation? And what is the produce of the land without manufactures? But to return to the subject.

In the first place, this article is incompatible with the three first articles of the Declaration of Rights which precede the Constitutional Act.

The first article of the Declaration of Rights says:

"The end of society is the public good; and the institution of government is to secure to every individual the enjoyment of his rights."

But the article of the Constitution to which I have just adverted proposes as the object of society, not the public good, or in other words, the good of *all*, but a partial good; or the good only of a *few;* and the Constitution provides solely for the rights of this few, to the exclusion of the many.

The second article of the Declaration of Rights says:

"The rights of man in society are liberty, equality, security of his person and property."

But the article alluded to in the Constitution has a direct tendency to establish the reverse of this

position, inasmuch as the persons excluded by this *inequality* can neither be said to possess liberty, nor security against oppression. They are consigned totally to the caprice and tyranny of the rest.

The third article of the Declaration of Rights says:

"Liberty consists in such acts of volition as are not injurious to others."

But the article of the Constitution, on which I have observed, breaks down this barrier. It enables the liberty of one part of society to destroy the freedom of the other.

Having thus pointed out the inconsistency of this article to the Declaration of Rights, I shall proceed to comment on that of the same article which makes a direct contribution a necessary qualification to the right of citizenship.

A modern refinement on the object of public revenue has divided the taxes, or contributions, into two classes, the *direct* and the *indirect,* without being able to define precisely the distinction or difference between them, because the effect of both is the same.

Those are designated indirect taxes which fall upon the consumers of certain articles on which the tax is imposed because, the tax being included in the price, the consumer pays it without taking notice of it.

Autographed Letter of Thomas Paine

This is the earliest original Paine letter that has come down to us. It was written in Lewes, England, dated July 18, 1772 and reads as follows:

> Gentlemen: As I am only Tenant in the house, I cannot think myself empowered to give any answer concerning the filling up, of the door way which you complain of. It is no repair and consequently not even under my agreement with her. The obligation was binding on the Landlord, not the Tenant, as I have not even the Right of objecting should Mrs. Ollive fill it up immediately. I cannot have any power to give any kind of answer in a case which is entirely hers, not mine.
>
> I am Gentlemen
> on account of the other proposals
> Your Obliged Humble Servant,
> T. Pain.

In this letter Thomas Paine writes his name, Pain. The "e" was added a few years later.

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Paine

July 18. 1772

The same observation is applicable to the territorial tax. The land proprietors, in order to reimburse themselves, will rack-rent their tenants: the farmer, of course, will transfer the obligation to the miller by enhancing the price of grain; the miller to the baker by increasing the price of flour; and the baker to the consumer by raising the price of bread. The territorial tax, therefore, though called *direct*, is, in its consequences, *indirect*.

To this tax the land proprietor contributes only in proportion to the quantity of bread and other provisions that are consumed in his own family. The deficit is furnished by the great mass of the community, which comprehends every individual of the nation.

From the logical distinction between the direct and indirect taxation some emolument may result, I allow, to auditors of public accounts, etc., but to the people at large I deny that such a distinction (which by the by is without a difference) can be productive of any practical benefit. It ought not, therefore, to be admitted as a principle in the Constitution.

Besides this objection the provision in question does not affect to define, secure, or establish the right of citizenship. It consigns to the caprice or discretion of the legislature the power of pronouncing

who shall, or shall not, exercise the functions of a citizen; and this may be done effectually, either by the imposition of a *direct* or *indirect* tax, according to the selfish views of the legislators, or by the mode of collecting the taxes so imposed.

Neither a tenant who occupies an extensive farm, nor a merchant or manufacturer who may have embarked a large capital in their respective pursuits, can ever, according to this system, attain the preemption of a citizen.

On the other hand, any upstart, who has, by succession or management, got possession of a few acres of land or a miserable tenement, may exultingly exercise the functions of a citizen, although perhaps neither possesses a hundredth part of the worth or property of a simple mechanic, nor contributes in any proportion to the exigencies of the state.

The contempt in which the old Government held mercantile pursuits, and the obloquy that attached on merchants and manufacturers, contributed not a little to its embarrassments and its eventual subversion; and, strange to tell, though the mischiefs arising from this mode of conduct are so obvious, yet an article is proposed for your adoption which has a manifest tendency to restore a defect inherent in the monarchy.

I shall now proceed to the second article of the same title, with which I shall conclude my remarks.

The second article says, "Every French soldier, who shall have served one or more campaigns in the cause of liberty, is deemed a citizen of the Republic, without any respect or reference to other qualifications." *

It would seem that in this article the Committee were desirous of extricating themselves from a dilemma into which they had been plunged by the preceding article. When men depart from an established principle they are compelled to resort to trick and subterfuge, always shifting their means to preserve the unity of their objects; and as it rarely happens that the first expedient makes amends for the prostitution of principle they must call in aid a second, of a more flagrant nature, to supply the deficiency of the former.

In this manner legislators go on accumulating error upon error, and artifice upon artifice, until the mass becomes so bulky and incongruous, and their embarrassment so desperate, that they are compelled,

* Eventually this article was changed to read: "All Frenchmen who shall have made one or more campaigns for the establishment of the Republic, are citizens, without condition as to taxes." —*Editor.*

as their last expedient, to resort to the very principle they had violated. The Committee were precisely in this predicament when they framed this article; and to me, I confess, their conduct appears specious rather than efficacious.*

It was not for himself alone, but for his family, that the French citizen, at the dawn of the Revolution (for then indeed every man was considered a citizen), marched soldier-like to the frontiers, and repelled a foreign invasion. He had it not in his contemplation, that he should enjoy liberty for the residue of his earthly career, and by his own act preclude his offspring from that inestimable blessing. No! He wished to leave it as an inheritance to his children, and that they might hand it down to their latest posterity.

If a Frenchman, who united in his person the character of a soldier and a citizen, was now to return from the army to his peaceful habitation, he must address his small family in this manner: "Sorry I am, that I cannot leave to you a small portion of what I have acquired by exposing my person to the

* The Committee was headed by the Abbe Sièyes, to whom Paine had addressed a challenging letter in defense of his republican principles in 1791.—*Editor.*

ferocity of our enemies and defeating their machinations. I have established the Republic, and, painful the reflection, all the laurels which I have won in the field are blasted, and all the privileges to which my exertions have entitled me extend not beyond the period of my own existence!" Thus the measure that has been adopted by way of subterfuge falls short of what the framers of it speculated upon; for in conciliating the affections of the *soldier*, they have subjected the *father* to the most pungent sensations, by obliging him to adopt a generation of slaves.

Citizens, a great deal has been urged respecting insurrections. I am confident that no man has a greater abhorrence of them than myself, and I am sorry that any insinuations should have been thrown out upon me as a promoter of violence of any kind. The whole tenor of my life and conversation gives the lie to those calumnies, and proves me to be a friend to order, truth and justice.

I hope you will attribute this effusion of my sentiments to my anxiety for the honor and success of the Revolution. I have no interest distinct from that which has a tendency to meliorate the situation of mankind. The Revolution, as far as it respects myself, has been productive of more loss and persecution than it is possible for me to describe or for you to

indemnify. But with respect to the subject under consideration, I could not refrain from declaring my sentiments.

In my opinion, if you subvert the basis of the Revolution, if you dispense with principles, and substitute expedients, you will extinguish that enthusiasm and energy which have hitherto been the life and soul of the Revolution; and you will substitute in its place nothing but a cold indifference and self-interest, which will again degenerate into intrigue, cunning and effeminacy.

But to discard all considerations of a personal and subordinate nature, it is essential to the well-being of the Republic that the practical or organic part of the Constitution should correspond with its principles; and as this does not appear to be the case in the plan that has been presented to you, it is absolutely necessary that it should be submitted to the revision of a committee, who should be instructed to compare it with the Declaration of Rights in order to ascertain the difference between the two, and to make such alterations as shall render them perfectly consistent and compatible with each other.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ENGLISH SYSTEM OF FINANCE

"On the verge, nay even in the gulf of bankruptcy."
Debates in Parliament.

WRITTEN in Paris, this pamphlet, dated April 8, 1796, was published simultaneously in France, England and America. The prediction Paine makes at its close that it would "be published in all languages" was borne out almost literally, as the pamphlet was soon circulated throughout Europe. Probably it hastened the gold suspension of the Bank of England in 1797, which it predicted. The attention it attracted caused the British Government to commission two pamphleteers, Ralph Broome and George Chalmers, to write a reply. In the French Archives there is an order for 1,000 copies of Paine's exposé, dated April 27, 1796, nineteen days after it first appeared.

In Richard Carlile's "Life of Paine" it is recorded that "Mr. Cobbett has made this little pamphlet a text-book for most of his elaborate treatises on our finances."

NOTHING, they say, is more certain than death, and nothing more uncertain than the time of dying; yet we can always fix a period beyond which man cannot live, and within some moment of which he will die. We are enabled to do this, not by any spirit of prophecy or foresight into the event, but by observation of what has happened in all cases of human or animal existence.

If then any other subject, such, for instance, as a system of finance, exhibits in its progress a series of symptoms indicating decay, its final dissolution is certain, and the period of it can be calculated from the symptoms it exhibits.

Those who have hitherto written on the English system of finance (the funding system) have been uniformly impressed with the idea that its downfall would happen *some time or other*. They took, however, no data for their opinion, but expressed it predictively, or merely as opinion, from a conviction that the perpetual duration of such a system was a natural impossibility. It is in this manner that Dr. Price has spoken of it; and [Adam] Smith, in his "Wealth of Nations" has spoken in the same manner; that is, merely as opinion without data.

"The progress," says Smith, "of the enormous debts, which at present oppress, and will in the long run *most probably ruin*, all the great nations of Europe [he should have said *governments*] has been pretty uniform." But this general manner of speaking, though it might make some impression, carried with it no conviction.

It is not my intention to predict anything; but I will show from data already known, from symptoms and facts which the English funding system has already exhibited publicly, that it will not continue to the end of Mr. Pitt's life, supposing him to live the usual age of a man. How much sooner it may fall I leave to others to predict.

Let financiers diversify systems of credit as they will, it is nevertheless true, that every system of credit is a system of paper money. Two experiments have already been had upon paper money; the one in America, the other in France.

In both those cases the whole capital was emitted, and that whole capital, which in America was called Continental money, and in France assignats, appeared in circulation; the consequence of which was, that the quantity became so enormous, and so disproportioned to the quantity of population, and to the quantity of objects upon which it could be employed, that the market, if I may so express it, was glutted with it and the value of it fell.

Between five and six years determined the fate of those experiments. The same fate would have happened to gold and silver, could gold and silver have been issued in the same abundant manner that paper had been, and confined within the country as paper money always is, by having no circulation out of it; or, to speak on a larger scale, the same thing would happen in the world, could the world be glutted with gold and silver, as America and France have been with paper.

The English system differs from that of America and France in this one particular, that its capital is

kept out of sight; that is, it does not appear in circulation. Were the whole capital of the national debt, which at the time I write is almost one hundred million pounds sterling, to be emitted in assignats, or bills, and that whole quantity put into circulation, as was done in America and in France, those English assignats, or bills, would soon sink in value as those of America and France have done; and that in a greater degree, because the quantity of them would be more disproportioned to the quantity of population in England, than was the case in either of the other two countries. A nominal pound sterling in such bills would not be worth one penny.

But though the English system, by thus keeping the capital out of sight, is preserved from hasty destruction, as in the case of America and France, it nevertheless approaches the same fate, and will arrive at it with the same certainty, though by a slower progress.

The difference is altogether in the degree of speed by which the two systems approach their fate, which, to speak in round numbers, is as twenty is to one; that is, the English system, that of funding the capital instead of issuing it, contained within itself a capacity of enduring twenty times longer than the systems adopted by America and France; and at the end of

that time it would arrive at the same common grave, the potter's field of paper money.

The datum I take for this proportion of twenty to one, is the difference between a capital and the interest at five per cent. Twenty times the interest is equal to the capital. The accumulation of paper money in England is in proportion to the accumulation of the interest upon every new loan; and therefore the progress to the dissolution is twenty times slower than if the capital were to be emitted and put into circulation immediately. Every twenty years in the English system is equal to one year in the French and American systems.

Having thus stated the duration of the two systems, that of funding upon interest, and that of emitting the whole capital without funding, to be as twenty to one, I come to examine the symptoms of decay, approaching to dissolution, that the English system has already exhibited, and to compare them with similar systems in the French and American systems.

The English funding system began one hundred years ago; in which time there have been six wars, including the war that ended in 1697.

1. The war that ended, as I have just said, in 1697.
2. The war that began in 1702.

3. The war that began in 1739.
4. The war that began in 1756.
5. The American war, that began in 1775.
6. The present war, that began in 1793.

The national debt, at the conclusion of the war which ended in 1697, was twenty-one millions and an half. (See Smith's "Wealth of Nations," chapter on Public Debts.) We now see it approaching fast to four hundred millions. If between these two extremes of twenty-one millions and four hundred millions, embracing the several expenses of all the including wars, there exist some common ratio that will ascertain arithmetically the amount of the debts at the end of each war, as certainly as the fact is known to be, that ratio will in like manner determine what the amount of the debt will be in all future wars, and will ascertain the period within which the funding system will expire in a bankruptcy of the Government; for the ratio I allude to, is the ratio which the nature of the thing has established for itself.

Hitherto no idea has been entertained that any such ratio existed, or could exist, that would determine a problem of this kind; that is, that would ascertain, without having any knowledge of the fact, what the expense of any former war had been, or

what the expense of any future war would be; but it is nevertheless true that such a ratio does exist, as I shall show, and also the mode of applying it.

The ratio I allude to is not in arithmetical progression like the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; nor yet in geometrical progression, like the numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256; but it is in the series of one half upon each preceding number; like the numbers 8, 12, 18, 27, 40, 60, 90, 135.

Any person can perceive that the second number, 12, is produced by the preceding number 8, and half 8; and that the third number, 18, is in like manner produced by the preceding number, 12, and half 12; and so on for the rest. They can also see how rapidly the sums increase as the ratio proceeds. The difference between the two first numbers is but four; but the difference between the two last is forty-five; and from thence they may see with what immense rapidity the national debt has increased, and will continue to increase, till it exceeds the ordinary powers of calculation, and loses itself in ciphers.

I come now to apply the ratio as a rule to determine in all cases.

I began with the war that ended in 1697, which was the war in which the funding system began. The ex-

pense of that war was twenty-one millions and an half. In order to ascertain the expense of the next war, I add to twenty-one millions and a half, the half thereof (ten millions and three quarters) which makes thirty-two millions and a quarter for the expense of that war. This thirty-two millions and a quarter, added to the former debt of twenty-one millions and a half, carries the national debt to fifty-three millions and three quarters. Smith, in his chapter on Public Debts, says, that the national debt was at this time fifty-three millions.

I proceed to ascertain the expense of the next war, that of 1739, by adding, as in the former case, one-half to the expense of the preceding war. The expense of the preceding war was thirty-two millions and a quarter; for the sake of even numbers, say, thirty-two millions; the half of which (16) makes forty-eight millions for the expense of that war.

I proceed to ascertain the expense of the War of 1756, by adding, according to the ratio, one-half to the expense of the preceding war. The expense of the preceding was taken at forty-eight millions, the half of which (24) makes seventy-two millions for the expense of that war. Smith (chapter on Public Debts) says the expense of the war of 1756 was seventy-two millions and a quarter.

I proceed to ascertain the expense of the American war, of 1775, by adding, as in the former cases, one-half to the expense of the preceding war. The expense of the preceding war was seventy-two millions, the half of which (36) makes 108 millions for the expense of that war. In the last edition of Smith (chapter on Public Debts), he says, the expense of the American war was *more than an hundred millions.*

I come now to ascertain the expense of the present war, supposing it to continue as long as former wars have done, and the funding system not to break up before that period. The expense of the preceding war was 108 millions, the half of which (54) makes 162 millions for the expense of the present war. It gives symptoms of going beyond this sum, supposing the funding system not to break up; for the loans of the last year and of the present year are twenty-two millions each, which exceeds the ratio compared with the loans of the preceding war.

It will not be from the inability of procuring loans that the system will break up. On the contrary, it is the facility with which loans can be procured that hastens that event. The loans are altogether paper transactions; and it is the excess of them that brings on, with accelerating speed, that progressive deprecia-

tion of funded paper money that will dissolve the funding system.

I proceed to ascertain the expense of future wars, and I do this merely to show the impossibility of the continuance of the funding system, and the certainty of its dissolution.

The expense of the next war after the present war, according to the ratio that has ascertained the preceding cases, will be:

	243	millions.
Expense of the second war	364	"
" " " third war	546	"
" " " fourth war	819	"
" " " fifth war	1228	"
	£3200	millions

which, at only four per cent will require taxes to the nominal amount of 128 millions to pay the annual interest, besides the interest of the present debt, and the expenses of government, which are not included in this account. Is there a man so mad, so stupid, as to suppose this system can continue?

When I first conceived the idea of seeking for some common ratio that should apply as a rule of measurement to all the cases of the funding system, so far as to ascertain the several stages of its approach to dis-

solution, I had no expectation that any ratio could be found that would apply with so much exactness as this does.

I was led to the idea merely by observing that the funding system was a thing in continual progression, and that whatever was in a state of progression might be supposed to admit of, at least, some general ratio of measurement, that would apply without any very great variation.

But who could have supposed that falling systems, or falling opinions, admitted of a ratio apparently as true as the descent of falling bodies? I have not *made* the ratio any more than Newton made the ratio of gravitation. I have only discovered it, and explained the mode of applying it.

To show at one view the rapid progression of the funding system to destruction, and to expose the folly of those who blindly believe in its continuance, and who artfully endeavor to impose that belief upon others, I exhibit in the annexed table, the expense of each of the six wars since the funding system began, as ascertained by ratio, and the expense of the six wars yet to come, ascertained by the same ratio.

FIRST SIX WARS.		SECOND SIX WARS.	
1.	21 millions	1.	243 millions
2.	33 "	2.	364 "

FIRST SIX WARS.		SECOND SIX WARS.	
3. . .	48 millions	3. . .	546 millions
4. . .	72 " *	4. . .	819 "
5. . .	108 "	5. . .	1228 "
6. . .	162 "	6. . .	1842 "
Total	£444 "	Total	£5042 "

Those who are acquainted with the power with which even a small ratio, acting in progression, multiplies in a long series, will see nothing to wonder at in this table. Those who are not acquainted with that subject, and not knowing what else to say, may be inclined to deny it. But it is not their opinion one way, nor mine the other, that can influence the event. The table exhibits the natural march of the funding system to its irredeemable dissolution.

* The actual expense of the War of 1739 did not come up to the sum ascertained by the ratio. But as that which is the natural disposition of a thing, as it is the natural disposition of a stream of water to descend, will, if impeded in its course, overcome by a new effort what it had lost by that impediment, so it was with respect to this war and the next (1756) taken collectively; for the expense of the War of 1756 restored the equilibrium of the ratio, as fully as if it had not been impeded. A circumstance that serves to prove the truth of the ratio more fully than if the interruption had not taken place. The War of 1739 was languid; the efforts were below the value of money at that time; for the ratio is the measure of the depreciation of money in consequence of the funding system; or what comes to the same end, it is the measure of the increase of paper. Every additional quantity of it, whether in bank notes or otherwise, diminishes the *real*, though not the *nominal* value of the former quantity.—*Author.*

Supposing the present Government of England to continue, and to go on as it has gone on since the funding system began, I would not give twenty shillings for one hundred pounds in the funds to be paid twenty years hence. I do not speak this predictively; I produce the data upon which that belief is founded; and which data it is everybody's interest to know, who have anything to do with the funds, or who are going to bequeath property to their descendants to be paid at a future day.

Perhaps it may be asked that as governments or ministers proceeded by no ratio in making loans or incurring debts, and nobody intended any ratio or thought of any, how does it happen that there is one? I answer that the ratio is founded in necessity; and I now go on to explain what that necessity is.

It will always happen, that the price of labor, or of the produce of labor, be that produce what it may, will be in proportion to the quantity of money in a country, admitting things to take their natural course. Before the invention of the funding system, there was no other money than gold and silver; and as nature gives out those metals with a sparing hand, and in regular annual quantities from the mines, the several prices of things were proportioned to the quantity of money at that time, and so nearly stationary as to vary but little in any fifty or sixty years of that period.

When the funding system began, a substitute for gold and silver began also. That substitute was paper; and the quantity increased as the quantity of interest increased upon accumulated loans. This appearance of a new and additional species of money in the nation soon began to break the relative value which money and the things it will purchase bore to each other before.

Everything rose in price; but the rise at first was little and slow, like the difference in units between the two first numbers, 8 and 12, compared with the two last numbers, 90 and 135, in the table. It was, however, sufficient to make itself considerably felt in a large transaction. When therefore Government, by engaging in a new war, required a new loan, it was obliged to make a higher loan than the former loan, to balance the increased price to which things had risen; and as that new loan increased the quantity of paper in proportion to the new quantity of interest, it carried the price of things still higher than before.

The next loan was again higher, to balance that further increased price; and all this in the same manner, though not in the same degree, that every new emission of Continental money in America, or of assignats in France, was greater than the preceding

emission, to make head against the advance of prices, till the combat could be maintained no longer.

Herein is founded the necessity of which I have just spoken. That necessity proceeds with accelerating velocity, and the ratio I have laid down is the measure of that acceleration; or, to speak the technical language of the subject, it is the measure of the increasing depreciation of funded paper money, which it is impossible to prevent while the quantity of that money and of bank notes continues to multiply. What else but this can account for the difference between one war costing twenty-one millions, and another war costing one hundred and sixty millions?

The difference cannot be accounted for on the score of extraordinary efforts or extraordinary achievements. The war that cost twenty-one millions was the War of the Confederates, historically called the Grand Alliance, consisting of England, Austria and Holland in the time of William III, against Louis XIV, and in which the confederates were victorious.

The present is a war of a much greater confederacy —a confederacy of England, Austria, Prussia, the German Empire, Spain, Holland, Naples and Sardinia, eight Powers, against the French Republic singly, and the Republic has beaten the whole Confederacy. But to return to my subject.

It is said in England, that the value of paper keeps equal with the value of gold and silver. But the case is not rightly stated; for the fact is, that the paper has *pulled down* the value of gold and silver to a level with itself. Gold and silver will not purchase so much of any purchasable article at this day as if no paper had appeared, nor so much as it will in any country in Europe where there is no paper. How long this hanging together of money and paper will continue, makes a new case; because it daily exposes the system to sudden death, independent of the natural death it would otherwise suffer.

I consider the funding system as being now advanced into the last twenty years of its existence. The single circumstance, were there no other, that a war should now cost *nominally* one hundred and sixty millions, which when the system began cost but twenty-one millions, or that the loan for one year only (including the loan to the Emperor) should now be *nominally* greater than the whole expense of that war, shows the state of depreciation to which the funding system has arrived.

Its depreciation is in the proportion of eight for one, compared with the value of its money when the system began; which is the state the French assignats stood a year ago (March, 1795) compared with gold

and silver. It is therefore that I say that the English funding system has entered on the last twenty years of its existence, comparing each twenty years of the English system with every single year of the American and French systems, as before stated.

Again, supposing the present war to close as former wars have done, and without producing either revolution or reform in England, another war at least must be looked for in the space of the twenty years I allude to; for it has never yet happened that twenty years have passed off without a war, and that more especially since the English Government has dabbled in German politics, and shown a disposition to insult the world, and the world of commerce, with her navy.

The next war will carry the national debt to very nearly seven hundred millions, the interest of which, at four per cent will be twenty-eight millions besides the taxes for the (then) expenses of government, which will increase in the same proportion, and which will carry the taxes to at least forty millions; and if another war only begins, it will quickly carry them to above fifty; for it is in the last twenty years of the funding system, as in the last year of the American and French systems without funding, that all the great shocks begin to operate.

I have just mentioned that paper in England has *pulled down* the value of gold and silver to a level with itself; and that this *pulling down* of gold and silver money has created the appearance of paper money keeping up. The same thing, and the same mistake, took place in America and in France, and continued for a considerable time after the commencement of their system of paper; and the actual depreciation of money was hidden under that mistake.

It was said in America, at that time, that everything was becoming *dear;* but gold and silver could then buy those dear articles no cheaper than paper could; and therefore it was not called depreciation. The idea of *dearness* established itself for the idea of depreciation. The same was the case in France. Though everything rose in price soon after assignats appeared, yet those dear articles could be purchased no cheaper with gold and silver, than with paper, and it was only said that things were *dear.*

The same is still the language in England. They call it *deariness.* But they will soon find that it is an actual depreciation, and that this depreciation is the effect of the funding system; which, by crowding such a continually increasing mass of paper into circulation, carries down the value of gold and silver with it. But gold and silver will, in the long run, revolt

against depreciation and separate from the value of paper; for the progress of all such systems appears to be that the paper will take the command in the beginning, and gold and silver in the end.

But this succession in the command of gold and silver over paper makes a crisis far more eventful to the funding system than to any other system upon which paper can be issued; for, strictly speaking, it is not a crisis of danger but a symptom of death. It is a death-stroke to the funding system. It is a revolution in the whole of its affairs.

If paper be issued without being funded upon interest, emissions of it can be continued after the value of it separates from gold and silver, as we have seen in the two cases of America and France. But the funding system rests altogether upon the value of paper being equal to gold and silver; which will be as long as the paper can continue carrying down the value of gold and silver to the same level to which itself descends, and no longer.

But even in this state, that of descending equally together, the minister, whoever he may be, will find himself beset with accumulating difficulties; because the loans and taxes voted for the service of each ensuing year will wither in his hands before the year expires, or before they can be applied. This will force

him to have recourse to emissions of what are called exchequer and navy bills, which, by still increasing the mass of paper in circulation, will drive on the depreciation still more rapidly.

It ought to be known that taxes in England are not paid in gold and silver, but in paper (bank notes). Every person who pays any considerable quantity of taxes, such as maltsters, brewers, distillers (I appeal for the truth of it, to any of the collectors of excise in England, or to Mr. Whitebread),* knows this to be the case.

There is not gold and silver enough in the nation to pay the taxes in coin, as I shall show; and consequently there is not money enough in the bank to pay the notes. The interest of the national funded debt is paid at the bank in the same kind of paper in which the taxes are collected.

When people find, as they will find, a reservedness among each other in giving gold and silver for bank notes, or the least preference for the former over the latter, they will go for payment to the bank, where they have a right to go. They will do this as a measure of prudence, each one for himself, and the truth or delusion of the funding system will then be proved.

* A contemporary Member of Parliament and authority on English finance.—*Editor.*

I have said in the foregoing paragraph that there is not gold and silver enough in the nation to pay the taxes in coin, and consequently that there cannot be enough in the bank to pay the notes. As I do not choose to rest anything upon assertion, I appeal for the truth of this to the publications of Mr. Eden (now called Lord Auckland) and George Chalmers, secretary to the Board of Trade and Plantation, of which Jenkinson (now Lord Hawkesbury) is president. (These sort of folks change their names so often that it is as difficult to know them as it is to know a thief.)

Chalmers gives the quantity of gold and silver coin from the returns of coinage at the mint; and after deducting for the light gold recoined, says that the amount of gold and silver coined is *about twenty millions*. He had better not have proved this, especially if he had reflected that *public credit is suspicion asleep*. The quantity is much too little.

Of this twenty millions (which is not a fourth part of the quantity of gold and silver there is in France, as is shown in Mr. Necker's treatise on the "Administration of the Finances") three millions at least must be supposed to be in Ireland, some in Scotland, and in the West Indies, Newfoundland, etc. The quantity therefore in England cannot be more than sixteen millions, which is four millions less than the amount

of the taxes. But admitting that there are sixteen millions, not more than a fourth part thereof (four millions) can be in London, when it is considered that every city, town, village and farmhouse in the nation must have a part of it, and that all the great manufactories, which most require cash, are out of London. Of this four millions in London, every banker, merchant, tradesman, in short every individual, must have some. He must be a poor shopkeeper indeed, who has not a few guineas in his till.

The quantity of cash therefore in the bank can never, on the evidence of circumstances, be so much as two millions; most probably not more than one million; and on this slender twig, always liable to be broken, hangs the whole funding system of four hundred millions, besides many millions in bank notes.

The sum in the bank is not sufficient to pay one-fourth of only one year's interest of the national debt, were the creditors to demand payment in cash, or demand cash for the bank notes in which the interest is paid, a circumstance always liable to happen.

One of the amusements that has kept up the farce of the funding system is that the interest is regularly paid. But as the interest is always paid in bank notes, and as bank notes can always be coined for the purpose, this mode of payment proves nothing.

The point of proof is, can the bank give cash for the bank notes with which the interest is paid? If it cannot, and it is evident it cannot, some millions of bank notes must go without payment, and those holders of bank notes who apply last will be worst off.

When the present quantity of cash in the bank is paid away, it is next to impossible to see how any new quantity is to arrive. None will arrive from taxes, for the taxes will all be paid in bank notes; and should the Government refuse bank notes in payment of taxes, the credit of bank notes will be gone at once. No cash will arise from the business of discounting merchants' bills; for every merchant will pay off those bills in bank notes, and not in cash. There is therefore no means left for the bank to obtain a new supply of cash, after the present quantity is paid away.

But besides the impossibility of paying the interest of the funded debt in cash, there are many thousand persons in London and in the country who are holders of bank notes that came into their hands in the fair way of trade, and who are not stockholders in the funds; and as such persons have had no hand in increasing the demand upon the bank, as those have had who for their own private interest, like Boyd and others, are contracting or pretending to contract for

new loans, they will conceive they have a just right that their bank notes should be first paid. Boyd has been very sly in France, in changing his paper into cash. He will be just as sly in doing the same thing in London, for he has learned to calculate; and then it is probable he will set off for America.

A stoppage of payment at the bank is not a new thing. Smith in his "Wealth of Nations," book ii. chap. 2, says, that in the year 1696, exchequer bills fell forty, fifty and sixty per cent; bank notes twenty per cent; and the bank stopped payment. That which happened in 1696 may happen again in 1796.

The period in which it happened was the last year of the War of King William. It necessarily put a stop to the further emissions of exchequer and navy bills and to the raising of new loans; and the peace which took place the next year was probably hurried on by this circumstance, and saved the bank from bankruptcy. Smith in speaking from the circumstances of the bank, upon another occasion, says (book ii. chap. 2), "This great company had been reduced to the necessity of paying in sixpences." When a bank adopts the expedient of paying in sixpences, it is a confession of insolvency.

It is worthy of observation that every case of failure in finances, since the system of paper began, has pro-

duced a revolution in governments, either total or partial. A failure in the finances of France produced the French Revolution. A failure in the finance of the assignats broke up the revolutionary government, and produced the present French Constitution. A failure in the finances of the Old Congress of America and the embarrassments it brought upon commerce, broke up the system of the old confederation, and produced the Federal Constitution. If, then, we admit of reasoning by comparison of causes and events, the failure of the English finances will produce some change in the government of that country.

As to Mr. Pitt's project of paying off the national debt by applying a million a year for that purpose, while he continues adding more than twenty millions a year to it, it is like setting a man with a wooden leg to run after a hare. The longer he runs the farther he is off.

When I said that the funding system had entered the last twenty years of its existence, I certainly did not mean that it would continue twenty years, and then expire as a lease would do. I meant to describe that age of decrepitude in which death is every day to be expected, and life cannot continue long. But the death of credit, or that state that is called bankruptcy, is not always marked by those progressive

stages of visible decline that marked the decline of natural life.

In the progression of natural life age cannot counterfeit youth, nor conceal the departure of juvenile abilities. But it is otherwise with respect to the death of credit; for though all the approaches to bankruptcy may actually exist in circumstances, they admit of being concealed by appearances.

Nothing is more common than to see the bankrupt of to-day a man in credit but the day before; yet no sooner is the real state of his affairs known than everybody can see he had been insolvent long before. In London, the greatest theater of bankruptcy in Europe, this part of the subject will be well and feelingly understood.

Mr. Pitt continually talks of credit, and the national resources. These are two of the feigned appearances by which the approaches to bankruptcy are concealed. That which he calls credit may exist, as I have just shown, in a state of insolvency, and is always what I have before described it to be, *suspicion asleep.*

As to national resources, Mr. Pitt, like all English financiers that preceded him since the funding system began, has uniformly mistaken the nature of a resource; that is, they have mistaken it consistently

with the delusion of the funding system; but time is explaining the delusion. That which he calls, and which they call, a resource, is not a resource, but is the *anticipation* of a resource. They have anticipated what *would have been* a resource in another generation had not the use of it been so anticipated.

The funding system is a system of anticipation. Those who established it an hundred years ago anticipated the resources of those who were to live an hundred years after; for the people of the present day have to pay the interest of the debts contracted at that time, and all debts contracted since. But it is the last feather that breaks the horse's back.

Had the system begun an hundred years before, the amount of taxes at this time to pay the annual interest at four per cent (could we suppose such a system of insanity could have continued) would be two hundred and twenty millions annually; for the capital of the debt would be five thousand four hundred and eighty-six millions, according to the ratio that ascertains the expense of the wars of the hundred years that are past.

But long before it could have reached this period, the value of bank notes, from the immense quantity of them (for it is in paper only that such a nominal revenue could be collected), would have been so low

or lower than Continental paper has been in America, or assignats in France; and as to the idea of exchanging them for gold and silver, it is too absurd to be contradicted.

Do we not see that nature, in all her operations, disowns the visionary basis upon which the funding system is built? She acts always by renewed successions, and never by accumulating additions perpetually progressing. Animals and vegetables, men and trees, have existed since the world began; but that existence has been carried on by succession of generations, and not by continuing the same men and the same trees in existence that existed first; and to make room for the new she removes the old.

Every natural idiot can see this; it is the stock-jobbing idiot only that mistakes. He has conceived that art can do what nature cannot. He is teaching her a new system—that there is no occasion for man to die—that the scheme of creation can be carried on upon the plan of the funding system—that it can proceed by continual additions of new beings, like new loans, and all live together in eternal youth. Go, count the graves, thou idiot, and learn the folly of thy arithmetic!

But besides these things there is something visibly farcical in the whole operation of loaning. It is

scarcely more than four years ago that such a lot of bankruptcy spread itself over London that the whole commercial fabric tottered; trade and credit were at a stand; and such was the state of things that, to prevent or suspend a general bankruptcy, the Government lent the merchants six millions in *Government* paper, and now the merchants lend the Government twenty-two millions in *their* paper; and two parties, Boyd and Morgan, men but little known, contend who shall be the lenders.

What a farce is this! It reduces the operation of loaning to accommodation paper, in which the competitors contend, not who shall lend, but who shall sign, because there is something to be got for signing.

Every English stock-jobber and minister boasts of the credit of England. Its credit, say they, is greater than that of any country in Europe. There is a good reason for this: for there is not another country in Europe that could be made the dupe of such a delusion. The English funding system will remain a monument of wonder, not so much on account of the extent to which it has been carried, as of the folly of believing in it.

Those who had formerly predicted that the funding system would break up when the debt should amount to one hundred or one hundred and fifty millions,

erred only in not distinguishing between insolvency and actual bankruptcy; for the insolvency commenced as soon as the Government became unable to pay the interest in cash, or to give cash for the bank notes in which the interest was paid, whether that inability was known or not, or whether it was suspected or not.

Insolvency always takes place before bankruptcy; for bankruptcy is nothing more than the publication of that insolvency. In the affairs of an individual, it often happens that insolvency exists several years before bankruptcy, and that the insolvency is concealed and carried on till the individual is not able to pay one shilling in the pound.

A government can ward off bankruptcy longer than an individual: but insolvency will inevitably produce bankruptcy, whether in an individual or in a government. If then the quantity of bank notes payable on demand, which the bank has issued, is greater than the bank can pay off, the bank is insolvent: and when that insolvency is declared, it is bankruptcy.*

* Among the delusions that have been imposed upon the nation by ministers to give a false coloring to its affairs, and by none more than by Mr. Pitt, is a motley, amphibious-charactered thing called the *balance of trade*. This balance of trade, as it is called, is taken from the custom-house books, in which entries are made of all cargoes exported, and also of all cargoes imported, in each

I come now to show the several ways by which bank notes get into circulation: I shall afterwards offer an estimate on the total quantity or amount of bank notes existing at this moment.

The bank acts in three capacities. As a bank of discount; as a bank of deposit; and as a banker for the Government.

First, as a bank of discount. The bank discounts merchants' bills of exchange for two months. When a merchant has a bill that will become due at the end of two months, and wants payment before that time, the bank advances that payment to him, deducting therefrom at the rate of five per cent per annum. The bill of exchange remains at the bank as a pledge or

year; and when the value of the exports, according to the price set upon them by the exporter or by the custom-house, is greater than the value of the imports, estimated in the same manner, they say the balance of trade is much in their favor.

The custom-house books prove regularly enough that so many cargoes have been exported, and so many imported; but this is all that they prove, or were intended to prove. They have nothing to do with the balance of profit or loss; and it is ignorance to appeal to them upon that account; for the case is, that the greater the loss is in any one year, the higher will this thing called the balance of trade appear to be according to the custom-house books.

For example, nearly the whole of the Mediterranean convoy has been taken by the French this year; consequently those cargoes will not appear as imports on the custom-house books, and therefore the balance of trade, by which they mean the profits of it, will appear to be so much the greater as the loss amounts

pawn, and at the end of two months it must be redeemed.

This transaction is done altogether in paper; for the profits of the bank, as a bank of discount, arise entirely from its making use of paper as money. The bank gives bank notes to the merchant in discounting the bill of exchange, and the redeemer of the bill pays bank notes to the bank in redeeming it. It very seldom happens that any real money passes between them.

If the profits of a bank be, for example, £200,000 a year (a great sum to be made merely by exchanging one sort of paper for another, and which shows also that the merchants of that place are pressed for money

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to; and, on the other hand, had the loss not happened, the profits would have appeared to have been so much the less. All the losses happening at sea to returning cargoes, by accidents, by the elements, or by capture, make the balance appear the higher on the side of the exports; and were they all lost at sea, it would appear to be all profit on the custom-house books.

Also every cargo of exports that is lost that occasions another to be sent, adds in like manner to the side of the exports, and appears as profit. This year the balance of trade will appear high, because the losses have been great by capture and by storms. The ignorance of the British Parliament in listening to this hackneyed imposition of ministers about the balance of trade is astonishing. It shows how little they know of national affairs—and Mr. Grey may as well talk Greek to them, as to make motions about the state of the nation. They understand only fox-hunting and the game laws.—*Author.*

for payments, instead of having money to spare to lend to government), it proves that the bank discounts to the amount of four millions annually, or £666,666 every two months; and as there never remain in the bank more than two months' pledges, of the value of £666,666, at any one time, the amount of bank notes in circulation at any one time should not be more than to that amount.

This is sufficient to show that the present immense quantity of bank notes, which are distributed through every city, town, village, and farm-house in England, cannot be accounted for on the score of discounting.

Secondly, as a bank of deposit. To deposit money at the bank means to lodge it there for the sake of convenience, and to be drawn out at any moment the depositor pleases, or to be paid away to his order. When the business of discounting is great, that of depositing is necessarily small. No man deposits and applies for discounts at the same time; for it would be like paying interest for lending money, instead of for borrowing it.

The deposits that are now made at the bank are almost entirely in bank notes, and consequently they add nothing to the ability of the bank to pay off the bank notes that may be presented for payment; and

besides this, the deposits are no more the property of the bank than the cash or bank notes in a merchant's counting house are the property of his bookkeeper. No great increase therefore of bank notes, beyond what the discounting business admits, can be accounted for on the score of deposits.

Thirdly, the bank acts as banker for the Government. This is the connection that threatens to ruin every public bank. It is through this connection that the credit of a bank is forced far beyond what it ought to be, and still further beyond its ability to pay. It is through this connection that such an immense redundant quantity of bank notes have gotten into circulation; and which, instead of being issued because there was property in the bank, have been issued because there was none.

When the treasury is empty, which happens in almost every year of every war, its coffers at the bank are empty also. It is in this condition of emptiness that the minister has recourse to emissions of what are called exchequer and navy bills which continually generates a new increase of bank notes, and which are sported upon the public, without there being property in the bank to pay them.

These exchequer and navy bills (being, as I have said, emitted because the treasury and its coffers at

the bank are empty, and cannot pay the demands that come in) are no other than an acknowledgment that the bearer is entitled to receive so much money. They may be compared to the settlement of an account, in which the debtor acknowledges the balance he owes, and for which he gives a note of hand; or to a note of hand given to raise money upon it.

Sometimes the bank discounts those bills as it would discount merchants' bills of exchange; sometimes it purchases them of the holders at the current price; and sometimes it agrees with the ministers to pay an interest upon them to the holders, and keep them in circulation. In everyone of these cases an additional quantity of bank notes gets into circulation, and are sported, as I have said, upon the public, without there being property in the bank, as banker for the Government, to pay them; and besides this, the bank has now no money of its own; for the money that was originally subscribed to begin the credit of the bank with, at its first establishment, has been lent to government and wasted long ago.

"The bank" says Smith, (book ii, chapter 2) "acts not only as an ordinary bank, but as a great engine of state; it receives and pays a greater part of the annuities which are due to the creditors of the *public.*" (It is worth observing, that the *public,* or the *nation,*

is always put for the Government, in speaking of debts.) "It circulates" says Smith, "exchequer bills, and it advances to government the annual amount of the land and malt taxes, which are frequently not paid till several years afterwards." (This advancement is also done in bank notes, for which there is not property in the bank.) "In those different operations" says Smith, "*its duty to the public* may sometimes have obliged it, without any fault of its directors, *to overstock the circulation with paper money*"—bank notes.

How its *duty* to the *public* can induce it *to overstock that public* with promissory bank notes which it *cannot pay*, and thereby expose the individuals of that public to ruin, is too paradoxical to be explained; for it is on the credit which individuals *give to the bank*, by receiving and circulating its notes, and not upon its *own* credit or its *own* property, for it has none, that the bank sports.

If, however, it be the duty of the bank to expose the public to this hazard, it is at least equally the duty of the individuals of that public to get their money and take care of themselves; and leave it to placemen, pensioners, government contractors, Reeves's Association, and the members of both Houses of Parliament, who have voted away the money at the nod of

the minister, to continue the credit if they can, and for which their estates individually and collectively ought to answer, as far as they will go.

There has always existed, and still exists, a mysterious, suspicious connection, between the minister and the directors of the bank, and which explains itself no other ways than by a continual increase in bank notes. Without, therefore, entering into any further details of the various contrivances by which bank notes are issued, and thrown upon the public, I proceed, as I before mentioned, to offer an estimate on the total quantity of bank notes in circulation.

However disposed governments may be to wring money by taxes from the people, there is a limit to the practise established by the nature of things. That limit is the proportion between the quantity of money in a nation, be that quantity what it may, and the greatest quantity of taxes that can be raised upon it.

People have other uses for money besides paying taxes; and it is only a proportional part of the money they can spare for taxes, as it is only a proportional part they can spare for house-rent, for clothing, or for any other particular use. These proportions find out and establish themselves; and that with such exactness, that if any one part exceeds its proportion, all the other parts feel it.

Before the invention of paper money (bank notes), there was no other money in the nation than gold and silver, and the greatest quantity of money that was ever raised in taxes during that period never exceeded a fourth part of the quantity of money in the nation. It was high taxing when it came to this point. The taxes in the time of William III never reached to four millions before the invention of paper, and the quantity of money in the nation at that time was estimated to be about sixteen millions.

The same proportions established themselves in France. There was no paper money in France before the present Revolution, and the taxes were collected in gold and silver money. The highest quantity of taxes never exceeded twenty-two millions sterling; and the quantity of gold and silver money in the nation at the same time, as stated by M. Necker, from returns of coinage at the mint, in his treatise on the "Administration of the Finances," was about ninety millions sterling. To go beyond this limit of a fourth part, in England, they were obliged to introduce paper money; and the attempt to go beyond it in France, where paper could not be introduced, broke up the Government. This proportion, therefore, of a fourth part, is the limit which the thing establishes for itself, be the quantity of money in a nation more or less.

The amount of taxes in England at this time is full twenty millions; and therefore the quantity of gold and silver, and of bank notes, taken together, amounts to eighty millions. The quantity of gold and silver, as stated by Lord Hawkesbury's secretary, George Chalmers, as I have before shown, is twenty millions; and, therefore, the total amount of bank notes in circulation, all made payable on demand, is sixty millions. This enormous sum will astonish the most stupid stock-jobber, and overpower the credulity of the most thoughtless Englishman: but were it only a third part of that sum, the bank cannot pay half a crown in the pound.

There is something curious in the movements of this modern complicated machine, the funding system; and it is only now that it is beginning to unfold the full extent of its movements. In the first part of its movements it gives great powers into the hands of government, and in the last part it takes them completely away.

The funding system set out with raising revenues under the name of loans, by means of which government became both prodigal and powerful. The loaners assumed the name of creditors, and though it was soon discovered that loaning was government-jobbing, those pretended loaners, or the persons who

purchased into the funds afterwards, conceived themselves not only to be creditors, but to be the *only* creditors.

But such has been the operation of this complicated machine, the funding system, that it has produced, unperceived, a second generation of creditors, more numerous and far more formidable and withal more real than the first generation; for every holder of a bank note is a creditor, and a real creditor, and the debt due to him is made payable on demand. The debt therefore which the government owes to individuals is composed of two parts; the one about four hundred millions bearing interest, the other about sixty millions payable on demand. The one is called the funded debt, the other is the debt due in bank notes.

The second debt (that contained in the bank notes) has, in a great measure, been incurred to pay the interest of the first debt; so that in fact little or no real interest has been paid by Government. The whole has been delusion and fraud. Government first contracted a debt, in the form of loans, with one class of people, and then ran clandestinely into debt with another class, by means of bank notes, to pay the interest. Government acted of itself in contracting

the first debt, and made a machine of the bank to contract the second.

It is this second debt that changes the seat of power and the order of things; for it puts it in the power of even a small part of the holders of bank notes (had they no other motives than disgust at Pitt and Grenville's sedition bills), to control any measure of government they found to be injurious to their interest; and that not by popular meetings, or popular societies, but by the simple and easy operation of withholding their credit from that government; that is, by individually demanding payment at the bank for every bank note that comes into their hands.

Why should Pitt and Grenville expect that the very men whom they insult and injure should, at the same time, continue to support the measures of Pitt and Grenville by giving credit to their promissory notes of payment? No new emissions of bank notes could go on while payment was demanding on the old, and the cash in the bank wasting daily away; nor any new advances be made to Government, or to the Emperor, to carry on the war; nor any new emission be made on exchequer bills.

"*The bank,*" says Smith, (book ii, chapter 2) "*is a great engine of State.*" And in the same paragraph he says, "*The stability of the bank is equal to that of*

the British Government;" which is the same as to say that the stability of the Government is equal to that of the bank, and no more. If then the bank cannot pay, the *arch-treasurer of the Holy Roman Empire* (S. R. I. A.*) is a bankrupt. When folly invented titles, she did not attend to their application; for ever since the Government of England has been in the hands of *arch-treasurers,* it has been running into bankruptcy; and as to the arch-treasurer *apparent,* he has been a bankrupt long ago. What a miserable prospect has England before its eyes!

Before the War of 1755 there were no bank notes lower than £20. During that war, bank notes of £15 and of £10 were coined; and now, since the commencement of the present war, they are coined as low as £5. These £5 notes will circulate chiefly among little shop-keepers, butchers, bakers, market-people, renters of small houses, lodgers, etc.

All the high departments of commerce and the affluent stations of life were already *overstocked,* as Smith expresses it, with the bank notes. No place remained open wherein to crowd an additional quantity of bank notes but among the class of people I have just mentioned, and the means of doing this

* Part of the inscription on an English guinea.—*Author.*

could be best effected by coining £5 notes. This conduct has the appearance of that of an unprincipled insolvent, who, when on the verge of bankruptcy to the amount of many thousands, will borrow as low as £5 of the servants in his house, and break the next day.

But whatever momentary relief or aid the minister and his bank might expect from this low contrivance of £5 notes, it will increase the inability of the bank to pay the higher notes, and hasten the destruction of all; for even the small taxes that used to be paid in money will now be paid in those notes, and the bank will soon find itself with scarcely any other money than what the hair-powder guinea-tax brings in.

The bank notes make the most serious part of the business of finance: what is called the national funded debt is but a trifle when put in comparison with it; yet the case of the bank notes has never been touched upon. But it certainly ought to be known upon what authority, whether that of the minister or of the directors, and upon what foundation, such immense quantities are issued. I have stated the amount of them at sixty millions; I have produced data for that estimation; and besides this, the apparent quantity of them, far beyond that of gold and silver in the nation, corroborates the statement. But were there

but a third part of sixty millions, the bank cannot pay half a crown in the pound; for no new supply of money, as before said, can arrive at the bank, as all the taxes will be paid in paper.

When the funding system began it was not doubted that the loans that had been borrowed would be repaid. Government not only propagated that belief, but it began paying them off. In time this profession came to be abandoned: and it is not difficult to see that bank notes will march the same way; for the amount of them is only another debt under another name; and the probability is that Mr. Pitt will at last propose funding them. In that case bank notes will not be so valuable as French assignats.

The assignats have a solid property in reserve, in the national domains; bank notes have none; and, besides this, the English revenue must then sink down to what the amount of it was before the funding system began—between three and four millions; one of which the *arch-treasurer* would require for himself, and the arch-treasurer *apparent* would require three-quarters of a million more to pay his debts. "*In France,*" says Sterne, "*they order these things better.*"

I have now exposed the English system of finance to the eyes of all nations; for this work will be pub-

lished in all languages. In doing this, I have done an act of justice to those numerous citizens of neutral nations who have been imposed upon by that fraudulent system, and who have property at stake upon the event.

As an individual citizen of America, and as far as an individual can go, I have revenged (if I may use the expression without any immoral meaning) the piratical depredations committed on American commerce by the English Government. I have retaliated for France on the subject of finance: and I conclude with retorting on Mr. Pitt the expression he used against France, and say, that the English system of finance "IS ON THE VERGE, NAY EVEN IN THE GULF OF BANKRUPTCY."

THOMAS PAINE.

Paris, nineteenth Germinal, fourth year of the Republic, April 8, 1796.

FORGETFULNESS

From "The Castle in the Air," to the "Little Corner of the World"

MUCH biographical interest attaches to this undated composition which Paine showed to Henry Redhead Yorke, who visited him in Paris, in 1802, and was permitted to copy these extracts. Using the sobriquet, "Little Corner of the World," Lady Smyth, whose husband, Sir Robert, was an English banker in Paris, wrote cheering letters to Paine in the Luxembourg prison. He replied to his then unknown correspondent, signing himself "The Castle in the Air." On his release from prison they met and thus began a friendship which lasted through life. Sir Robert Smyth died during the year that Yorke visited Paine in Paris. His death was the culmination of an illness brought on by imprisonment under Napoleon. Paine addressed several poetic effusions to Lady Smyth, who had been a Miss Blake, a London belle, of Hanover Square.

MEMORY, like a beauty that is always present to hear herself flattered, is flattered by everyone. But the absent and silent goddess, Forgetfulness, has no votaries, and is never thought of: yet we owe her much. She is the goddess of ease, though not of pleasure.

When the mind is like a room hung with black, and every corner of it crowded with the most horrid images imagination can create, this kind, speechless goddess of a maid, Forgetfulness, is following us night and day with her opium wand, and gently touching first one and then another, benumbs them into rest, and at last glides them away with the

silence of a departing shadow. It is thus the tortured mind is restored to the calm condition of ease, and fitted for happiness.

How dismal must the picture of life appear to the mind in that dreadful moment when it resolves on darkness, and to die! One can scarcely believe such a choice was possible. Yet how many of the young and beautiful, timid in everything else, and formed for delight, have shut their eyes upon the world, and made the waters their sepulchral bed! Ah, would they in that crisis, when life and death are before them, and each within their reach, would they but think, or try to think, that Forgetfulness will come to their relief, and lull them into ease, they could stay their hand, and lay hold of life.

But there is a necromancy in wretchedness that entombs the mind, and increases the misery, by shutting out every ray of light and hope. It makes the wretched falsely believe they will be wretched ever. It is the most fatal of all dangerous delusions; and it is only when this necromantic night-mare of the mind begins to vanish, by being resisted, that it is discovered to be but a tyrannic specter.

All grief, like all things else, will yield to the obliterating power of time. While despair is preying on the mind, time and its effects are preying on de-

spair; and certain it is the dismal vision will fade away and Forgetfulness, with her sister Ease, will change the scene. Then let not the wretched be rash, but wait, painful as the struggle may be, the arrival of Forgetfulness; for it will certainly arrive.

I have twice been present at the scene of attempted suicide. The one a love-distracted girl in England, the other of a patriotic friend in France; and as the circumstances of each are strongly pictured in my memory, I will relate them to you. They will in some measure corroborate what I have said of Forgetfulness.

About the year 1766, I was in Lincolnshire, in England, and on a visit at the house of a widow lady, Mrs. E——, at a small village in the fens of that county. It was in summer; and one evening after supper, Mrs. E—— and myself went to take a turn in the garden. It was about eleven o'clock, and to avoid the night air of the fens, we were walking in a bower, shaded over with hazel bushes. On a sudden, she screamed out, and cried, "Lord, look, look!" I cast my eyes through the openings of the hazel bushes in the direction she was looking, and saw a white shapeless figure, without head or arms, moving along one of the walks at some distance from us.

I quitted Mrs. E——, and went after it. When I got into the walk where the figure was, and was following it, it took up another walk. There was a holly bush in the corner of the two walks, which, it being night, I did not observe; and as I continued to step forward, the holly bush came in a straight line between me and the figure, and I lost sight of it; and as I passed along one walk, and the figure the other, the holly bush still continued to intercept the view, so as to give the appearance that the figure had vanished.

When I came to the corner of the two walks, I caught sight of it again, and coming up with it, I reached out my hand to touch it; and in the act of doing this, the idea struck me, will my hand pass through the air, or shall I feel anything? Less than a moment would decide this, and my hand rested on the shoulder of a human figure.

I spoke, but do not recollect what I said. It answered in a low voice, "Pray let me alone." I then knew who it was. It was a young lady who was on a visit to Mrs. E——, and who, when we sat down to supper, said she found herself extremely ill, and would go to bed. I called to Mrs. E——, who came, and I said to her, "It is Miss N——." Mrs. E—— said, "My God, I hope you are not going to do your-

self any hurt"; for Mrs. E—— suspected something. She replied with pathetic melancholy, "Life has not one pleasure for me." We got her into the house, and Mrs. E—— took her to sleep with her.

The case was, the man to whom she expected to be married had forsaken her, and when she heard he was to be married to another the shock appeared to her to be too great to be borne. She had retired, as I have said, to her room, and when she supposed all the family were gone to bed (which would have been the case if Mrs. E—— and I had not walked into the garden), she undressed herself, and tied her apron over her head; which, descending below her waist, gave her the shapeless figure I have spoken of. With this and a white under-petticoat and slippers, for she had taken out her buckles and put them at the servant maid's door, I suppose as a keepsake, and aided by the obscurity of almost midnight, she came down stairs, and was going to drown herself in a pond at the bottom of the garden, toward which she was going when Mrs. E—— screamed out. We found afterwards that she had heard the scream, and that was the cause of her changing her walk.

By gentle usage, and leading her into subjects that might, without doing violence to her feelings, and without letting her see the direct intention of it, steal

her as it were from the horror she was in (and I felt a compassionate earnest disposition to do it, for she was a good girl) she recovered her former cheerfulness, and was afterwards a happy wife, and the mother of a family.

The other case, and the conclusion in my next:

In Paris, in 1793, I had lodgings in the Rue Fauxbourg, St. Denis, No. 63. They were the most agreeable, for situation, of any I ever had in Paris, except that they were too remote from the Convention, of which I was then a member. But this was recompensed by their being also remote from the alarms and confusion into which the interior of Paris was then often thrown. The news of those things used to arrive to us, as if we were in a state of tranquillity in the country.

The house, which was inclosed by a wall and gateway from the street, was a good deal like an old mansion farm-house, and the court-yard was like a farmyard, stocked with fowls, ducks, turkeys and geese; which, for amusement, we used to feed out of the parlor window on the ground floor. There were some hutches for rabbits, and a sty with two pigs.

Beyond, was a garden of more than an acre of ground, well laid out, and stocked with excellent fruit trees. The orange, apricot, and greengage plum,

were the best I ever tasted; and it is the only place where I saw the wild cucumber. The place had formerly been occupied by some curious person.

My apartments consisted of three rooms; the first for wood, water, etc., with an old fashioned closet chest, high enough to hang up clothes in; the next was the bed room; and beyond it the sitting room, which looked into the garden through a glass door; and on the outside there was a small landing place railed in, and a flight of narrow stairs almost hidden by the vines that grew over it, by which I could descend into the garden, without going down stairs through the house.

I am trying by description to make you see the place in your mind, because it will assist the story I have to tell; and which I think you can do, because you once called upon me there on account of Sir [Robert Smyth], who was then, as I was soon afterwards, in arrestation. But it was winter when you came, and it is a summer scene I am describing.

* * * *

I went into my chambers to write and sign a certificate for them, which I intended to take to the guardhouse to obtain their release. Just as I had finished it a man came into my room dressed in the Parisian uniform of a captain, and spoke to me in good Eng-

lish, and with a good address. He told me that two young men, Englishmen, were arrested and detained in the guard-house, and that the section (meaning those who represented and acted for the section), had sent him to ask me if I knew them, in which case they would be liberated.

This matter being soon settled between us, he talked to me about the Revolution, and something about the "Rights of Man," which he had read in English; and at parting offered me in a polite and civil manner, his services. And who do you think the man was that offered me his services? It was no other than the public executioner Samson, who guillotined the King, and all who were guillotined in Paris; and who lived in the same section, and in the same street with me.

* * * *

As to myself, I used to find some relief by walking alone in the garden after dark, and cursing with hearty good will the authors of that terrible system that had turned the character of the Revolution I had been proud to defend.

I went but little to the Convention, and then only to make my appearance; because I found it impossible to join in their tremendous decrees, and useless and dangerous to oppose them. My having voted

and spoken extensively, more so than any other member, against the execution of the King, had already fixed a mark upon me: neither dared any of my associates in the Convention to translate and speak in French for me anything I might have dared to have written.

* * * *

Pen and ink were then of no use to me: no good could be done by writing, and no printer dared to print; and whatever I might have written for my private amusement, as anecdotes of the times, would have been continually exposed to be examined, and tortured into any meaning that the rage of party might fix upon it; and as to softer subjects, my heart was in distress at the fate of my friends, and my harp hung upon the weeping willows.*

As it was summer we spent most of our time in the garden, and passed it away in those childish amusements that serve to keep reflection from the mind, such as marbles, scotch-hops, battledores, etc., at which we were all pretty expert.

In this retired manner we remained about six or seven weeks, and our landlord went every evening into the city to bring us the news of the day and the evening journal.

* Alluding to the Girondins.—*Editor.*

I have now, my "Little Corner of the World," led you on, step by step, to the scene that makes the sequel to this narrative, and I will put that scene before your eyes. You shall see it in description as I saw it in fact.*

* * * *

He recovered, and being anxious to get out of France, a passage was obtained for him and Mr. Choppin; they received it late in the evening, and set off the next morning for Basel before four, from which place I had a letter from them, highly pleased with their escape from France, into which they had entered with an enthusiasm of patriotic devotion. Ah, France! thou hast ruined the character of a Revolution virtuously begun, and destroyed those who produced it. I might almost say like Job's servant, "and I, only, am escaped."

Two days after they were gone I heard a rapping at the gate, and looking out of the window of the bed room I saw the landlord going with the candle to the gate, which he opened, and a guard with

* The case was that of a young Englishman named Johnson, a wealthy disciple of Paine's in London, who had followed him to Paris and dwelt in the same house with him. Hearing that Marat had decreed Paine's death, Johnson hurriedly willed his property to Paine, then stabbed himself, but recovered. At Marat's trial, Paine was questioned about this incident.—*Editor.*

muskets and fixed bayonets entered. I went to bed again, and made up my mind for prison, for I was then the only lodger. It was a guard to take up [Johnson and Choppin], but, I thank God, they were out of their reach.

The guard came about a month after in the night, and took away the landlord Georgeit; and the scene in the house finished with the arrestation of myself. This was soon after you called on me, and sorry I was it was not in my power to render to [Sir Robert Smyth] the service that you asked.

I have now fulfilled my engagement, and I hope your expectation, in relating the case of [Johnson], landed back on the shore of life, by the mistake of the pilot who was conducting him out; and preserved afterwards from prison, perhaps a worse fate, without knowing it himself.

You say a story cannot be too melancholy for you. This is interesting and affecting, but not melancholy. It may raise in your mind a sympathetic sentiment in reading it; and though it may start a tear of pity, you will not have a tear of sorrow to drop on the page.

* * * *

Here, my contemplative correspondent, let us stop and look back upon the scene. The matters here

related being all facts, are strongly pictured in my mind, and in this sense Forgetfulness does not apply. But facts and feelings are distinct things, and it is against feelings that the opium wand of Forgetfulness draws us into ease.

Look back on any scene or subject that once gave you distress, for all of us have felt some, and you will find, that though the remembrance of the fact is not extinct in your memory, the feeling is extinct in your mind. You can remember when you had felt distress, but you cannot feel that distress again, and perhaps will wonder you felt it then. It is like a shadow that loses itself by light.

It is often difficult to know what is a misfortune: that which we feel as a great one to-day may be the means of turning aside our steps into some new path that leads to happiness yet unknown. In tracing the scenes of my own life, I can discover that the condition I now enjoy, which is sweet to me, and will be more so when I get to America, except by the loss of your society, has been produced, in the first instance, in my being disappointed in former projects.

Under that impenetrable veil, futurity, we know not what is concealed, and the day to arrive is hidden from us. Turning then our thoughts to those cases of despair that lead to suicide, when, "the mind," as

you say, "neither sees nor hears, and holds counsel only with itself; when the very idea of consolation would add to the torture, and self-destruction is its only aim," what, it may be asked, is the best advice, what the best relief? I answer, seek it not in reason, for the mind is at war with reason, and to reason against feelings is as vain as to reason against fire: it serves only to torture the torture by adding reproach to horror.

All reasoning with ourselves in such cases acts upon us like the reason of another person, which, however kindly done, serves but to insult the misery we suffer. If reason could remove the pain, reason would have prevented it. If she could not do the one, how is she to perform the other? In all such cases we must look upon Reason as dispossessed of her empire, by a revolt of the mind. She retires herself to a distance to weep, and the ebony scepter of Despair rules alone. All that Reason can do is to suggest, to hint a thought, to signify a wish, to cast now and then a kind of bewailing look, to hold up when she can catch the eye, the miniature-shaded portrait of Hope; and though dethroned, and can dictate no more, to wait upon us in the humble station of a handmaid.